

Jordan Times

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من المؤسسة الصحفية العربية للرأي
جورديان تايمز يومية

Aziz arrives en route to New York

AMMAN (AP) — Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz arrived here Friday en route to New York to prod the United Nations to lift a nearly four-year embargo on Iraqi oil sales. Iraq embassy spokesman Adel Ibrahim said Mr. Aziz was leading a delegation that included General Amer Rashid, the head of Iraq's Military Industrial Organisation, to the U.N. meetings slated to begin Monday. Mr. Ibrahim said the 10-man delegation was scheduled to head for New York on Saturday. Another Iraqi diplomat said Mr. Aziz will meet with U.N. weapons monitoring officials to "explain that Iraq has complied with all U.N. resolutions pertaining to the destruction of non-conventional weapons and that the oil embargo is no longer justified and must be lifted completely. Iraq has cooperated with the United Nations and we hope to see a reciprocal move."

'Eid begins tomorrow

AMMAN (Petra) — Chief Islamic Justice Sheikh Izzeddin Al Khateeb Al Tamimi said Friday that Saturday will be the 30th of the Holy Month of Ramadan and that Sunday will be the first day of 'Eid Al Fitr. Sheikh Tamimi said that the crescent of the lunar month of Shawal, which follows Ramadan, was not sighted Friday evening and therefore Saturday should be the last day of Ramadan. Sheikh Tamimi congratulated His Majesty King Hussein on the occasion of the feast, expressing his allegiance to the King. He also offered condolences to relatives of those who were killed in the Feb. 25 Hebron massacre.

Five wounded in S. Lebanon violence

TYRE (AP) — A roadside bomb explosion sparked rocket and artillery duels Friday between guerrillas and Israeli and allied militia gunners in South Lebanon. Security sources said at least five people, including a U.N. Fijian soldier, were wounded. No one was hurt in the 1 p.m. (1100 GMT) blast, detonated as two cars belonging to the South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia drove through the village of Beit Leif, in the western sector of Israel's self-proclaimed "security zone." The civilians and the U.N. peacekeepers were wounded in the retaliatory barrage on Haris, Yater, Beit Yahoun, Hadatha and Aita Al Jabal, said the sources. The five villages, just north of the "security zone," are policed by the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon.

French peacekeeper killed in Bosnia

PARIS (R) — A French soldier serving with U.N. peacekeeping forces in former Yugoslavia was killed by sniper fire in the Bihac pocket of northern Bosnia on Friday, an army spokesman said. The dead man was a professional soldier whose name will be released once his family has been advised, the spokesman said. He was the 19th Frenchman to be killed on peacekeeping duties in ex-Yugoslavia, where some 6,000 French soldiers are serving with U.N. peacekeeping forces. Bihac is a Muslim-held pocket surrounded by Serb forces.

Russia drops secrets case against scientist

MOSCOW (R) — Russian prosecutors on Friday officially dropped a controversial case against a scientist accused of betraying state secrets, a spokesman for the prosecutor-general's office said. A statement released by the office said investigators had not found enough evidence to back charges that Vil Mirzayanov broke the law by giving details of Russian research into chemical weapons development. The statement said Acting Prosecutor-General Alexei Ilyushenko had dropped the case against Mr. Mirzayanov "because his actions had not broken any legal norms."

Germany: No damage from arrest in Russia

BONN (R) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl's spokesman pledged Friday that the arrest of an alleged German spy by Russia would not damage close ties between Bonn and Moscow. Spokesman Dieter Vogel declined to confirm or deny the Russian charges that the unnamed suspect, a Russian citizen, worked for Bonn's federal intelligence agency (BND). But he said Mr. Kohl's top aide in charge of intelligence matters, Bernd Schmidbauer, had called the deputy head of Russian's counter-espionage service on Friday morning to discuss the case at length. "There will definitely not be any effect on Russian German relations," Mr. Vogel told reporters.

U.S. links Security Council vote with resumption of talks

Washington offers 'compromise,' but PLO sees it as humiliating

TUNIS (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher apparently has offered a compromise in an effort to woo Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat back to negotiations with Israel, Palestinian sources said Friday.

They said Mr. Arafat received the offer in a letter from Mr. Christopher that urged him to resume the negotiations "without delay." The letter was delivered to the PLO leader in the middle of the night by U.S. Ambassador John McCarthy.

The 28-month-old talks were suspended after a Jewish settler killed at least 60 Muslims as they prayed in a Hebron mosque Feb. 25.

The U.N. Security Council has yet to issue a resolution condemning the massacre because of U.S. and Israeli objections to references to Jerusalem as an occupied territory.

and to the stationing of a foreign military presence to protect Palestinians.

However, Palestinian sources said Mr. Christopher's letter to Mr. Arafat said the United States would support a resolution calling for a "temporary international or foreign presence in the occupied territories" in return for the PLO's resumption of talks.

The letter did not refer to a foreign military presence, the sources said.

Some PLO officials have suggested a compromise could mean a limited number of unarmed observers.

However, the letter made it clear that the United States would continue to refuse a reference to Jerusalem as an occupied territory and likewise would not back a reference to the Geneva Convention, which says an occupying power must guarantee the protection of the civilians in the area it occupies, the sources said.

The U.S. delegation will abstain from the vote on these items when the resolution will be put into vote, the sources quoted the letter as saying.

Mr. Arafat took the letter as a warning and told Mr. McCarthy he could not respond before consulting with his senior aides and other PLO leaders, according to the sources.

Privately, the sources said Mr. Arafat considered the American demand as "humiliating and harmful" and were not sure he could accept it.

Mr. McCarthy handed over Mr. Christopher's letter at 2 a.m. (0100 GMT) after requesting an urgent meeting with Mr. Arafat, the Palestinian sources said.

The official PLO news agency Wafa reported that Mr. Arafat had received the letter from Mr. Christopher "dealing with the situation in the occupied territories and efforts

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No-fire-on-Jews order sparks Israeli indignation and outcry

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israeli security forces in Hebron are under orders never to shoot a Jewish settler who opens fire on Palestinians, a border police commander has testified at an inquiry into the mosque massacre last month.

The government-appointed commission is investigating the killing by settler Baruch Goldstein of about 60 Palestinians in the Tomb of the Patriarchs on Feb. 25.

"Instructions are to take cover, wait until the clip is empty or the gun jams and then overpower him," Meir Tayar, commander of the paramilitary border police in Hebron, told a visibly surprised Israeli panel.

"Even if I had been there (in the mosque), I could not have done anything — there were special orders," he said.

Judge Abdul Rahman Zu'bi, the only Arab member of the five-member panel asked: "You mean if a settler fires at worshippers and you see him, you are not allowed to shoot him even in the leg?"

Mr. Tayar said: "According to the instructions, as I interpret them, yes (I cannot)." Asked what he thought of the policy, he said: "Perhaps it is an illegal order — I am not a lawyer."

The officer said the orders were issued, verbally, by the commander of the Israeli army brigade in the Hebron area, Colonel Meir Khalif. Col. Khalif's testimony on Tuesday did not touch on the subject. The disclosure triggered criticism in Israel.

"An order such as this is impossible to give. It's not even legal," said Orr Orr, a retired army general and chair-

man of parliament's foreign affairs and defence committee.

Calling the orders "stupid and improper," Mr. Orr, a reserve general, said: "It is the duty of whoever is in charge of law and order to act against anyone shooting, Jew or Arab."

Eliahu Ben-Elissar, a legislator from the opposition right-wing Likud Party, told Israel Television such an order was "impossible... I would see such a situation as grave."

Lawyer Dana Briskman of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel told Israel Television: "It cannot be that there is one law for an Arab and one law for a Jew."

Major-General Shaul Mofaz, the military commander of the occupied West Bank, testified later that when

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Darawshe: Syria is ready for peace

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli Arab lawmaker Abdul Wahab Darawshe said Friday that he did not return from a pioneer visit to Syria with any messages for the Israeli leadership from President Hafez Al Assad, but was convinced Damascus is ready for peace.

Mr. Darawshe said Mr. Assad was willing to meet with Israeli leaders if it would bring real progress in the blocked negotiations.

"The impression I got from the Syrian president and the Syrian people that both are ready for a comprehensive and just peace that can guarantee them the end of the occupation," Mr. Darawshe told the Associated Press.

Mr. Darawshe returned to Israel Friday after a four-day visit to Syria, during which he met with both Mr. Assad and Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa.

"They are ready for complete peace with complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights. The president has expressed that in a very sincere way," Mr. Darawshe said.

"I hope Israel will respond in a positive way," he added. Mr. Darawshe headed a 57-member delegation to Syria to pay condolences to Mr. Assad after the death of his oldest son Basil last January in a car accident.

A second Israeli Arab delegation also plans to visit Syria soon, Israel Radio said.

The delegation is to be headed by Ahmad Tibi, a close aide to Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat, and Arab-Israeli leader Ibrahim Nimr Hussein, the report added.

The unprecedented trip by Mr. Darawshe's group was given a low-profile treatment by the Syrian government, which treated the group as an ordinary Arab delegation offering its condolences to Mr. Assad.

Mr. Darawshe also said that the Syrian president was still not convinced that Israel was serious about peace.

"The Syrian president still believes that Israel is talking about peace but they are not doing anything on the ground. The president said Israel is still oppressing the Palestinians and still building and expanding settlements," Mr. Darawshe said.

Mr. Darawshe said he would try to meet with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres to brief them on his visit.

He said in addition to the leaders of Israel he will also tell the Israeli public the positive impression he got from Syria.

Conflict risk cut in Yemen

SANAA (R) — Military officials entrusted with separating rival Yemeni army units have said the risk of confrontation had receded.

Aden television said the officials had successfully ended the first stage of their mission to end military tension and confrontation and return northern and southern forces to their original bases.

In interviews with the television, Major-General Eid Kamel, Jordanian deputy chief of staff and a member of the military committee, said the team has "managed to contain the crisis and prevent it" from exploding. The explosive nature of the crisis has receded. It is now behind us. It is something of the past."

The committee made up of Yemeni, Jordanian and Omani officers and the U.S. and French military attaches in Sanaa said on Wednesday night the response of military commanders to its decisions "has been extremely good" and that progress has been achieved in separating northern and southern Yemeni units.

Clashes between the forces took place only hours after President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his deputy Ali Salem Al

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Hamas threatens revenge in Brooklyn

TEL AVIV (AP) — A Palestinian group issued a veiled warning Friday that revenge for the mosque slaughter in the occupied West Bank by a Jewish settler might come in Brooklyn, New York. The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, said in a leaflet distributed in the occupied Gaza Strip that the man who attacked a vanload of orthodox Jews in New York City was inspired by Islamic teachings. "We will retain the cry of condemnation on your heads and our hand is backed by millions of Muslim hands that are ready to carry out their execution role against Jews," said the leaflet. It claimed that Rashid Baz was acting under Islamic inspiration when he opened fire on a van carrying 15 orthodox Jews on the Brooklyn Bridge March 1, killing one and wounding three others. The 28-year-old Lebanese-born taxi driver has been indicted on one count of murder and 14 counts of attempted murder, as well as assault and weapons charges. "Islam is the only sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the living proof is that the militant Rashid Baz, the son of Islam, moved to take the souls of the evil dogs of Jews in Brooklyn," the leaflet said.



A Palestinian worshipper, fortunate enough to be allowed into the Al Aqsa mosque by Israeli soldiers, carry his prayer mat as he walks into the mosque for Friday prayers (AFP photo)

Israel disarms Jews at wall, keeps Muslims away

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Police disarmed Jews praying at the western wall and kept tens of thousands of Palestinians out of Jerusalem's Old City to prevent violence over the Hebron massacre during Muslim prayers on the last Friday of Ramadan.

The unprecedented security kept Jerusalem quiet but Palestinians clashed with Israeli troops after midday prayers in Hebron and the Gaza Strip.

Soldiers dispersed about 100 youths who defied curfew in Hebron where a Jewish settler massacred at least 60 Palestinians at prayer exactly two weeks ago, witnesses said.

Protests also raged throughout the Gaza Strip but there were no immediate reports of casualties. Most of the nearly two million Palestinians of the occupied West Bank and Gaza were barred from entering Jerusalem. The ban has been in force since the Feb. 25 massacre.

More than 1,500 paramilitary police swamped the narrow

alleys beside the Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa Mosque complex where only 20,000 worshippers were allowed in for the most important prayers of the Muslim fasting month. Normally up to 200,000 people would pack the complex which overlooks the western wall, which Jews revere.

Nearly 1,800 police officers moved to strategic points around Jerusalem and forced Jewish worshippers to disarm at the gates to wall.

Police chief Raf Peled said the officers were meant to head off clashes linked to the Hebron massacre.

"We will do everything so the prayers will go peacefully," Mr. Peled said on Israel radio.

Blue-uniformed officers were posted at junctions around the old walled city, barring Arabs from entering the complex as thousands headed through other gates to Al Aqsa.

The occupation authorities acted aggressively against the Muslims and this great Friday by erecting checkpoints and

closing the roads leading to the mosque," said Mohammad Hussein, the mosque prayer leader. He said there should be 250,000 worshippers instead of the 20,000 who got through.

During the Friday prayers last week police cleared the area around the wall as a security precaution.

Troops tightened a two week closure on the occupied territories, to prevent revenge attacks in Israel, barring even some Palestinians with special permits from entering.

The closure was imposed Feb. 25 after the attack at the Ibrahim mosque when settler Baruch Goldstein mowed down dozens of worshippers during Ramadan prayers.

Militants have since published several threats to avenge the slayings.

On Thursday, hundreds of Palestinians, their fury unabated two weeks after the mosque massacre in Hebron, rolled flaming tires and hurled stones at Hebron's main Jew-

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Kozyrev in Israel

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev arrived in Tel Aviv on Friday and pressed Israel to accept an international presence to protect Palestinians after the Hebron mosque massacre.

Moscow has proposed a new Middle East peace conference, along the lines of the historic Madrid forum in 1991, to get stalled Israeli-Arab peace talks back on track. Israel firmly rejects the proposal.

"There will be no second Madrid conference, and we will not agree to an armed international presence in the territories," Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told reporters Thursday. "I will politely accept the guest, but will make our position unequivocally clear."

Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin greeted Mr. Kozyrev instead of Mr. Kozyrev's colleague Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

"We shall gladly hear his support for our ideas, but the ideas we have heard from Russia do not in our opinion advance this process," Mr. Beilin told reporters.

After separate meetings with Mr. Peres and Mr. Rabin, Mr. Kozyrev was to leave for Tunis.

"We must provide additional security and we support an international presence," Mr. Kozyrev said.

Speaking after landing at 12:45 p.m. (1045 GMT), Kozyrev added, we must advance towards a solution and try to get all these pieces to fit together and not permit negative momentum to gain ground."

In Tunis, a senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official on Thursday welcomed as constructive the Russian proposal for a new Middle East conference in Madrid.

Deputies debate chances for extended session

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The 12th Parliament ends its first ordinary session on March 23 amidst strong expectations that it will be recalled for an extraordinary session whose agenda will be set by the government.

Parliamentary sources said Friday the government had "given clear indications" it would not recommend to His Majesty the King that the current ordinary session be extended.

The Islamic Action Front (IAF) deputies are leading the campaign for extending the regular session so that issues on the agenda would not be determined by the government but they say they have little hopes that the executive authority will heed their call.

But sources said the majority of other deputies favour the convening of an extraordinary session which would focus on

completing what they called important draft legislations. The Constitution gives the King the right to extend parliamentary sessions indefinitely but stipulates that an extraordinary session can be held at the request of the majority of deputies. The government sets the agenda of an extraordinary session but deputies have the right to address all issues during ordinary sessions.

"The government says it opposes the extension of the session in order to have time to run the affairs of ministries. But what it really wants is to freeze the supervisory role of the House," asserted one deputy.

Parliamentary sources said the IAF was pushing for an extension of the session so that it would be able to address political issues, mainly the peace process, in what one IAF deputy described as a "sensitive era" in this regard.

"A spokesman of the IAF parliamentary bloc Hantash Mansour told the Jordan Times Friday the front "is concerned with having the session extended so that the House can continue to supervise the work of the government."

"The front does not want the government to feel free from parliamentary control in this critical era. We don't want it to set the agenda of the House," said Mr. Mansour.

But Mr. Mansour agreed with other deputies that the session would not be extended and an extraordinary session would be called soon to address a number of draft laws, mainly the draft sales tax law.

Deputy Abdul Karim Kahariti said the House had the constitutionally required majority to ask for the convening of an extraordinary session which he expected to be held soon due to the urgency with which some legislations need

to be completed. House Speaker Taher Al Masri said Thursday that presidents of parliamentary blocs have agreed on the necessity of holding an extraordinary session, adding that the House would continue to consult with the government on the issues on the agenda.

Speaking to reporters after a meeting held to discuss the issue, Mr. Masri said presidents of the blocs were in general agreement on the issues that they would like to see listed on the agenda of the session.

Parliamentary sources said the controversial sales tax law would be on top of the agenda due to the urgency with which the government wants it approved. The government last month presented the draft law to the House as an important element of the economic

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Feast turns mourning for Amman's Hebronites

By Jack Redden
Reuters

AMMAN — The festive mood as the Muslim World ends the fasting month of Ramadan will not be felt in Amman's Hebron Club, where feasting will be replaced by a sombre memorial service for the victims of the Hebron massacre.

A notice on the door of the club, similar to scores of Palestinian societies that keep alive memories of home towns and villages, says where to leave donations for the families of those gunned down by a Jewish settler in the West Bank city's crowded old mosque.

"No doubt the massacre affected everyone, but it had a special effect on Hebronites," said Wahid Jaabari, head of the society. "The sadness showed in the faces of Hebronites because it affected everyone's family."

Mr. Jaabari, from a promi-

ent family with Hebron roots dating to the early days of Islam, counted two dead and 20 wounded relatives among victims of the Feb. 25 slaughter.

When the sighting of the new moon ends Ramadan, and launches the 'Eid Al Fitr feast — it could be either Saturday or Sunday — members of the large and influential Hebron community will converge on the club for readings of the Koran.

After the massacre in what is known to Muslims as the Ibrahim Mosque and to Jews as the Tomb of the Patriarchs, thousands of Hebronites flocked to the club in affluent West Amman for news of relatives.

Details remain sketchy two weeks later — even Israeli and Palestinian investigators at the scene find it difficult to determine the precise number of casualties.

In the days after the massacre, leading Jordanians

streamed to the club to express condolences: King Hussein, Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali.

It reflected both the impact on all Jordanians and the influence of the former residents of Hebron, a group renowned for their business expertise.

In industry, they dominate Jordan's transportation, in government, Jawad Al Anani, minister of information and prime ministerial affairs, is considered the key economic thinker.

"There are not less than 100,000 people in Jordan from Hebron," said Mr. Jaabari.

Although the Israeli occupation of the West Bank city known in Arabic as Al Khali only began in 1967 — pushing a wave of refugees over the border — opportunities in earlier years had already drawn people to Jordan.

Mr. Jaabari himself was working for the Amman gov-

ernment in 1967 when Israel swept over the West Bank. His father, Sheikh Mohammad Ali Jaabari, a former Jordanian cabinet minister, stayed in Hebron as the mayor under the occupation.

Hebron is a conservative city, which in recent years has translated into support for the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas — chief rival of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) that is negotiating with Israel.

"For a long time people were with the PLO but now it is retreating and they support Hamas more," said Mr. Jaabari. "They think (PLO leader) Yasser Arafat is in a conspiracy with the Israelis."

The Hebron Club shows the PLO was among the victims of the massacre. When members converged on the club after the massacre, those belonging to the PLO were shoved and insulted.

U.N. agency resumes food airlift to Juba

KAMPALA (Agencies) — The U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) is airlifting food to the southern Sudanese town of Juba to allow agencies to resume giving rations to more than 240,000 people.

Trevor Page, WFP director in Uganda, told Reuters on Friday a chartered Boeing 707 began the agency's first airlift of food to Juba in six months on Thursday with two flights from Entebbe in Uganda.

The plane, carrying 37 tonnes of maize on each trip, will make three flights daily to deliver 1,000 tonnes of maize to allow relief agencies to resume giving rations to the estimated 243,000 people in Juba, where food stocks are low.

WFP, food arm of the United Nations, said alarming food shortages in Juba took a particularly heavy toll on children.

Some 65 children were reported to have died in the town over the last two weeks from disease related to malnutrition.

A top U.S. State Department official said on Thursday the United States had urged the United Nations to take action over a government offensive against civilians in southern Sudan.

Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs George Moose said the offensive had already displaced 110,000 civilians and that if it continued, conditions will get even worse.

He said attacks, including government bombings of villages, had no possible military justification and the U.N. Security Council was considering a draft resolution on southern Sudan.

On Tuesday, the presidents of Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda called on Sudan's military leader and the heads of rebel factions to attend peace talks next week to end their civil war in the south.

Tens of thousands of civilians have fled towards the Ugandan border since the government launched the offensive in January.

The war pitting the black, mainly and Islamist Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA)

rebels against the now hardline Islamic government in Khartoum broke out in 1983.

Khaled Ardly, WFP chief in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum, said people in Juba, held by the government, could no longer afford to buy food. Sorghum prices were the highest in Sudan.

"On top of the thousands of displaced people already reliant on food aid in Juba, there are many other needy people whose meagre crops failed this year because of drought," he added.

"We can only meet 50 per cent of the actual daily food requirements in the south because of a severe shortage of funds for air operations," said Mr. Ardly, adding more planes would have to be chartered to avert massive suffering in coming months.

Juba's population has been largely dependent on food aid since 1988. General rations were suspended in December because of a shortage of food and the last WFP airlift to the town was last September.

The agency was forced to start Thursday's airlift because a 700-tonne river barge was diverted elsewhere and could not reach Juba because the water level of the White Nile was too low.

Kenyan call

In Nairobi, Kenya's foreign minister urged warring groups in both Sudan and Somalia to enter direct peace talks to end the suffering of innocent civilians.

"We urge them to help spare human life, end the suffering. The fact that sometimes even humanitarian supplies cannot reach the needy is appalling," Minister Kalonzo Musyoka told reporters.

He said Kenya hoped Sudanese military leader Lieutenant General Omar Hassan Al Bashir and rival rebel chiefs John Garang and Riak Machar would attend peace talks in Nairobi from March 17.

"We consider all groups are invited," said Mr. Musyoka.



SITE OF MASSACRE: This partial view of the Ibrahim Mosque dated Feb. 25 shows that prayers were under way and opened fire and threw grenades, killing at least 60 Palestinians and wounding over 300 others (AFP photo)

Non-kosher meat ban paves way for majority backing for Rabin

TEL AVIV (AP) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin looks ready to gain back a solid parliamentary majority to back his peace policies thanks to a proposed ban on importing non-kosher meat.

Aryeh Deri, the leader of the ultra-religious Shas Party, said the passage of a law that cleared the way to ban the import of non-kosher meat in Israel meant his party could rejoin the coalition. Mr. Rabin has led a minority government ever since Shas broke away last summer.

"There will probably be an agreement by the end of this week, or the beginning of next," Mr. Deri told Israel's Channel 2 Television.

Mr. Rabin's coalition currently commands 56 of the 120 seats in parliament. An additional five legislators belonging to Arab parties back his policies, giving him a bare majority of one.

Shas's six legislators return to Mr. Rabin what he has described as process. Mr. Rabin had said he wanted Shas

back before he leaves for Washington next Wednesday for a meeting with President Clinton.

Reports have said that Mr. Rabin is willing to concede some of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) demands for increased security for Palestinians following last month's massacre in Hebron mosque by a Jewish settler.

That could mean the dismantling of some settlements, the disarming of settlers, and the introduction of international observers, all moves that would prove immensely unpopular among Israelis.

The television showed Mr. Rabin grinning broadly after Wednesday's vote, which passed 67 to nine.

Shas left Mr. Rabin's government last year when two of its leaders, including Mr. Deri, were charged with fraud and mismanaging party funds.

Mr. Deri still faces trial, and there is a supreme court ban against his colleague, Rafael Pinhasi, holding any government position.

But Mr. Rabin won the party back by throwing his weight behind what has become known as "the meat law" — actually one altered paragraph in a constitutional law, "basic law: freedom of occupation."

When Mr. Rabin was elected in 1992, he said he would use the "freedom of occupation" law to privatise the government's monopolies, a host of businesses, including meat importing.

The government had used its monopoly in the past to prevent the import of non-kosher meat — meat that fails to meet Jewish ritual standards — and Mr. Rabin's commitment led Shas to ask for a formal guarantee that private importers could not bring in non-kosher meat.

Mr. Rabin agreed, and his Labour Party pushed such a law through parliament last summer, but the supreme court threw it out as unconstitutional.

So Mr. Rabin set about altering the constitution.

Demirel says Kurdish deputies linked to PKK

ISTANBUL (Agencies) — President Suleyman Demirel has accused leaders and deputies of the pro-Kurdish Democracy Party (DEP) of having ties with Kurdish rebels.

Mr. Demirel made the charges during a phone exchange with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl over the detention of the six DEP deputies in Ankara, the president's office said in a written statement.

The statement said the German leader made the call to express his concern over the deputies, detained after Turkey's parliament lifted their immunity to force them to stand trial for making separatist speeches. The deputies could face capital punishment.

Chief State Security Court Prosecutor Nusret Demirel began questioning the six on Wednesday, nearly a week after they were taken into custody. He told reporters the interrogation of one of the MPs, whom he did not name, had been completed.

The action against the lawmakers has dismayed Turkey's Western allies, notably France, Germany and the United States.

"The president told Kohl... the DEP deputies and party leaders had begun acting as if they were organs of the (separatist) Kurdish Labour Party (PKK)," the statement said.

Mr. Demirel, the statement added, told Mr. Kohl Turkey had evidence linking the deputies to the PKK, and said the national legislature had shown its patience by not lifting their immunity until now.

"He told Kohl that he had on many occasions urged the DEP deputies to repudiate the PKK in public and asked them to continue their struggle within a constitutional frame. But they emphatically refused," the statement said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lebanon brings back death penalty

BEIRUT (R) — The Lebanese parliament approved the introduction of capital punishment for political murderers in a late-night vote on Thursday. It also voted to make execution mandatory for anyone convicted of murder with intent. Deputies rapidly approved the measures proposed by the government on Monday amid nationwide indignation at the Feb. 27 bombing of a Maronite church near Beirut which killed 10 worshippers and injured 60. The law will not take effect until it is published in the state gazette but Maronite Deputy Ghassan Matar demanded its immediate application "even if it means daily bangings." The death penalty has been frozen in Lebanon since 1983 when the last execution for murder was carried out. Existing laws envisage capital punishment for murder in criminal cases only, but they give judges broad discretionary powers to avoid imposing the death penalty which have been cancelled under the new measure.

Kahane's son jailed for attack

TEL AVIV (R) — Binyamin Kahane, 28-year-old son of late anti-Arab Rabbi Meir Kahane, was jailed for nine months on Thursday for an attack on police and an illegal gathering in 1991, Israel's Itim news agency said. Israeli Magistrate Amram Sharon in the town of Hadera passed the sentence on Mr. Kahane, head of the militant "Kahane Lives" movement formed after his father's assassination in New York in 1990. Police said he was jailed immediately. Itim said Mr. Kahane was convicted of attacking police, obstructing policemen from doing their jobs and joining an illegal gathering on the way to the town of Umm Al Fahem where Meir Kahane had organised anti-Arab protests.

Hundreds pray for ailing Schneerson

TEL AVIV (R) — Hundreds of Orthodox Jews prayed Thursday on behalf of ailing New York Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, 91, whom many of them believe to be the Messiah. While they prayed, they were told that Rabbi Schneerson's condition had worsened since his admission to a New York hospital on Tuesday. One of the leaders said they had just received information he was being taken to another hospital after it was discovered he was paralysed now on the right side of his body. Last week Rabbi Schneerson, grand rabbi of the ultra-orthodox Lubavitch movement, underwent an operation to remove a cataract from one eye. Four teenage students who were returning home after attending a prayer session for him after the surgery were shot last week as their van travelled over the Brooklyn bridge. One died from his wounds on Saturday.

Irish businessman held on Iran arms charge

MIAMI (AP) — A magistrate has denied bail to an Irish businessman accused of plotting to smuggle U.S.-manufactured night vision goggles to Iran. Prosecutors said Thomas McGuinn, 57, of County Sligo had travel documents, a pilot's license and access to large amounts of money, and was therefore a flight risk. Defence attorney Ira Loewy offered to surrender all travel documents, sign papers waiving future extradition, and have his client wear an electronic bracelet. But U.S. Magistrate Linnea Johnson agreed with Assistant U.S. Attorney Wilfredo Fernandez, ordering Mr. McGuinn held without bail until his next hearing, scheduled for April 7. Mr. McGuinn, who operates Mac Aviation (Ireland) Ltd., is accused of a violating U.S. export laws by attempting to smuggle into Iran 200 pairs of the Litton night vision goggles, which can be used by military pilots. He attempted to buy the goggles from a U.S. Customs Service undercover agent, saying they were intended for Irish air-sea rescue. Mr. McGuinn had \$6 million in Iranian letters of credit with him when he was arrested by customs agents last week at Miami International Airport. He is being held at the Federal Metropolitan Correctional Centre outside Miami.

Israeli army reprimands general

TEL AVIV (R) — The Israeli army on Thursday reprimanded a general for a 1992 training accident in which five soldiers were killed. It said former Chief Staff Dan Shomron, acting on the army's behalf, had issued an administrative reprimand to Major-General Amram Levin. The soldiers, members of an elite training unit, were killed by a missile accidentally fired during a training exercise at Tse'elim in the desert in November 1992. Six were wounded. Gen. Shomron issued a note — a lesser punishment than a reprimand — to the personal file of Major-General Uri Saguy, now the chief of military intelligence, over the incident. An army communiqué said no direct link was found between the general's activities and the accident. Israel Radio said the action would not prevent either from being promoted. The government suspended two foreign journalists for several weeks at the time of the accident for bypassing military censorship.

Israelis urged to quit Bophuthatswana capital

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israelis living in Mmabatho, capital of the black homeland Bophuthatswana, have been advised to leave in the wake of the government's collapse, an official said Friday. A statement from Israel's foreign ministry Thursday night said about 50 Israelis lived in the Mmabatho area. Israelis living in other areas of Bophuthatswana were advised to stay at home and in touch with the embassy in Pretoria. "We asked the Israelis to leave because we saw two days ago that there was going to be a coup," said Allon Liel, the Israeli ambassador in Pretoria, in a telephone interview Friday. Mr. Liel said that Israel has never recognised Bophuthatswana as an independent homeland. He stressed that Israelis who have reportedly gone there as agricultural or economic advisers were in a "private capacity," not sanctioned by the Israeli government.

Iraqi minister refutes Mubarak's renewed assertions

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — For the first time since the end of the Gulf war over Kuwait in 1991, Baghdad has dismissed charges that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein had misled Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in the mediation effort that preceded the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

Instead, Iraqi Information Minister Yousef Humadi said in a report carried by the London-based Al Arab newspaper last week, President Saddam had cautioned Mr. Mubarak "not to give any false assurances" to the Kuwaitis.

The page on the dispute and the unexplained situation leading to the Mubarak-reported Iraqi promise not to invade Kuwait was reopened by remarks attributed to Mr. Mubarak by Kuwait's Al Qabas newspaper, which carried an interview with the Egyptian leader two weeks ago. Al Qabas quoted Mr. Mubarak as saying that President Saddam had promised him, during his mediation efforts, that Iraq had no intention of invading Kuwait.

Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990, several weeks after President Saddam and other Iraqi leaders accused the

Kuwaitis of exploiting Iraqi oil fields on the border and undermining international oil prices by overproduction.

The invasion came a few hours after Kuwait's crown prince and prime minister, Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabab, and Iraqi Vice-President Izzat Ibrahim met in the Saudi port city of Jeddah in an Arab-mediated bid to defuse the crisis. Mr. Mubarak was one of the Arab leaders involved in mediating between the two neighbours.

According to Mr. Humadi, who was then director of President Saddam's office, Mr. Mubarak, accompanied by his then Foreign Minister Esmat Abdul Meguid, (who is now secretary-general of the Arab League), Information Minister Safwat Sharif and Political Adviser Osama Al Baz, flew to Baghdad on July 24 in his mediation bid.

Mr. Humadi said that President Mubarak and President Saddam met at the presidential palace in Baghdad. The two leaders held a closed-door meeting before aides joined them, said Mr. Humadi.

According to Mr. Humadi, who attended the enlarged meeting and took minutes, President Saddam and President Mubarak briefed the delegations on what had transpired during the meeting and

there was no mention of any promise that Iraq, which had moved its troops close to the Kuwaiti border, would not invade Kuwait.

At the outset of the enlarged meeting, Mr. Humadi said, President Saddam lamented the disarray in the Arab ranks and "how the selfish oil sheikhs, despite their God-given oil wealth and prosperity, had surrendered Arab interests to the West instead of trying to serve and regain Arab rights."

Mr. Humadi quoted Mr. Mubarak as replying to President Saddam in front of the delegations: "the Kuwaitis, Mr. President, are the Jews of the Gulf."

According to Mr. Humadi, the officials accompanying Mr. Mubarak "nodded in agreement" when the Egyptian president spoke those words. Mr. Humadi, who was appointed Iraqi information minister a few months after the war over Kuwait, quoted President Saddam as recalling an Iraqi leadership meeting in 1977 to discuss the dramatic visit of then Egyptian President Anwar Sadat to occupied Jerusalem.

President Saddam, who was then vice-president, recalled he told that meeting that had the oil sheikhs supported Egypt and extended proper

assistance to Egypt, Sadat would not have taken the unilateral step to make peace with Israel.

The Gulf states, President Saddam reportedly said, "had led Egypt to a dead end, leaving Sadat with no alternatives."

According to Mr. Humadi, "bad President Saddam spoken those words in public or on television, the streets of Egypt would have erupted into demonstrations in support of his argument."

During the expanded July 24 meeting, President Saddam "clearly told President Mubarak that he should not give any assurance, of any kind, to the rulers of Kuwait before the (Aug. 1) Jeddah meeting because (any such assurances) would only lead to the Kuwaitis stiffening their position," according to Mr. Humadi.

As it turned out, reports of the Jeddah meeting had said, Sheikh Saad behaved in a manner that insulted the Iraqis and clearly stated that Kuwait was in no mood to listen to the Iraqi complaint over the oil fields on the border or the international prices of oil. A few hours after that ill-fated meeting Iraqis invaded Kuwait.

According to Mr. Humadi,

di's account of the events of the week before the invasion, President Saddam met with U.S. ambassador April Glaspie on July 25, one day after the Mubarak visit to Baghdad.

During that meeting, Mr. Humadi was also present. President Saddam was briefing Ms. Glaspie on the outcome of the Egyptian mediation and was interrupted by a telephone call from President Mubarak.

According to Mr. Humadi, President Saddam excused himself and went to the next room to take the call. "The line was very bad, and the president had to shout at the top of his voice," Mr. Humadi said, adding that all others in the meeting room, including Ms. Glaspie herself, could hear his end of the conversation.

Mr. Humadi said that President Saddam, during that telephone call, also clearly reaffirmed his position that Mr. Mubarak, in his capacity as a mediator, should not give any assurance to Kuwait before the Jeddah meeting.

Following the telephone call, President Saddam resumed his meeting with Ms. Glaspie and told her what he had discussed with President Mubarak and that he had restated his position that no assurance should be given to the Kuwaitis.

According to Mr. Humadi, President Saddam's report on Mr. Mubarak's efforts and the Iraqi response to it were clearly noted in the minutes of the Glaspie meeting. A copy of those minutes was sent to Mr. Mubarak's adviser Baz when he visited Baghdad with a message from Mr. Mubarak.

During a meeting with Mr. Baz, while receiving the message, President Saddam reaffirmed his position and there was no ambiguity over the Iraqi stand that unless the Kuwaitis responded positively to Baghdad's grievances they would have to face the consequences.

However, Mr. Mubarak flew to Kuwait shortly thereafter and told the Kuwaiti leaders that "Iraq had no plan to invade Kuwait and that he (Mubarak) had managed to defuse the crisis on his own," Mr. Humadi said.

The comments of Mr. Humadi indicated that Baghdad was angered by Mr. Mubarak's renewed assertions over his mediation bid and clear accusation of President Saddam that he did not live up to a pledge of honour he purportedly made — a charge that cuts deep into the core of the Arab tradition of verbal promises made and honoured at the peril of death.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Les Aventuriers De L'Espace
17:41 L'Ecole Des Fantômes
18:30 News in French
19:00 News in Arabic
19:15 Ushuaia
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Family Matters
21:00 Local Programme
22:00 News in English
22:50 Feature Film: "Vic Versa"

PRAYER TIMES

04:51 Fair
05:31 Al-Sunna (Sunset) Doha
11:45 Dhuhir
15:06 Asr
17:41 Maghrib
18:58 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifeth, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 827285
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 652526

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 24328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 664195

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623624, 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be cloudy and cold with occasional rainfall in various parts of the Kingdom, and winds becoming southerly moderate to active. In Agaba, partly cloudy weather conditions will prevail with a chance of scattered showers. Winds will be southerly moderate and seas calm.

Min/Max temp.

Amman 3/10

Agaba 11/19

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Deserts 3/17

Jordan Valley 8/17

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 11, Agaba 20, Humidity readings: Amman 52 per cent, Agaba 30 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Bassim Qaddumi 648633

Dr. Abdul Wahab Awad 846078

Dr. Fakhr Jaych 865880

Dr. Abdul Hadi Taym 620115

Firas pharmacy 661912

Ferdows pharmacy 778336

Al Asma pharmacy 637055

Nairookh pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Mohammad Khalil 273009

Al Qadi Pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Rajah Sagr 901290

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 891228

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630331

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 1111230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre 813813/22

Khalid Maternity, J. Amm. 642816

Aidh Maternity, J. Amm. 642412

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/4

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 948845

Al-Mushir Hospital 667277

The Islamic, Abdali 666127/7

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6



LAST RAMADAN FRIDAY PRAYERS: His Majesty King Hussein attends the last Friday prayer of Ramadan at the King Abdullah Mosque in Amman. Also attending the prayer were His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein and Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, the King's military secretary, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and senior military and civil officials. The King and worshippers listened to Friday sermon, which was delivered by Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Al Abbadi. In his sermon Dr. Abbadi noted King Hussein's continuous endeavours to unite Arab ranks and heal inter-Arab rifts particularly at this time when the Arab Nation is facing tremendous challenges. Dr. Abbadi said the King has worked day and night to turn Jordan into a model for the building and respect of human rights (Petra photo)



Her Majesty Queen Noor Thursday presents a certificate and shield to Helwa Malhas, one of 18 women honoured for their voluntary work in social development. Right is Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, president of the General Federation of Jordanian Women which organised the event (Photo by George Crystall)

18 Jordanian women honoured for work in social development

AMMAN (J.T.) — Eighteen Jordanian women Thursday were honoured for their pioneering work in the social development sector in a ceremony held to mark International Women's Day.

The ceremony was held under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, who is the honorary president of the General Federation of Jordanian Women (GFJW), the organiser of Thursday's event.

In her opening remarks, GFJW President Haifa Abu Ghazaleh thanked Queen Noor for her support and encouragement for wider involvement of women in the development process.

Dr. Abu Ghazaleh discussed the advances that have been achieved by women in recent years in the areas of education and employment. She concluded her remarks by saying that the efforts of many Jordanian women leaders, epitomised by the Queen's efforts, have "transformed our society from an inert and traditional one into a more developed and dynamic social realm."

In'am Mufti, speaking on behalf of the women leaders, thanked Queen Noor for patronising this annual event, and described the Queen's efforts in the development sector as a driving force and a catalyst in the emancipation of women and the improvement of the quality of life of their families.

Mrs. Mufti said that the consolidated efforts of the various voluntary societies and the non-governmental organisations have been key to maintaining sustainable development.

Most of the women being honoured were teachers, and all have actively participated in the establishment and continuing efforts of non-governmental, non-profit institutions and organisations dedicated to the socio-economic development of the nation's women.

Many of the awardees have for over 25 years volunteered much of their time to charity work, donating their experience and talents.

Towards the end of the ceremony, held at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC), Queen Noor presented the women with a certificate of recognition and a shield.

The awardees were: In'am Mufti, Isa'af Shukair, Emily Naffa, Intisar Jardaneh, Asma Mdanat, Bnithaina Jardaneh, Helwa Malhas, Rose Shawk Louza, Siham Al Qasem, Eideb Al Mutlaq, Mary Shafiq Aghabi, Mediha Bakir Kookh, Nabihah Othman Al Hassan, Nayfeh Al Majali, Nahleh Maknai, Huda Suleiman Hijazi, Haifa Malhees Al Bashir, and Widad Hassan Khalifeh.

The Queen was received upon arrival by Minister of Social Development Mohammad Sqour, Minister of Culture Amin Mahmoud, RCC Director Iyad Qattan, Dr. Abu Ghazaleh and members of the GFJW Executive Committee.

Cold, cloudy weather expected until Monday

AMMAN (J.T.) — A cold front and depression centred east of Cyprus will continue to affect the Kingdom, according to the Meteorology Department.

Weather forecaster Mohammad Bataineh Friday told the Jordan Times that the depression will last through Sunday and gradually taper off Monday.

According to Mr. Bataineh, the country can expect cold, partly cloudy to cloudy and scattered showers through Sunday. Winds will be south-westerly moderate to fresh, he said.

On Monday, Mr. Bataineh expects a gradual rise in temperatures with a chance for scattered showers in the northern parts of the Kingdom.

He said it will be sunny on Tuesday, and another tangible rise in temperatures will occur.

Mr. Bataineh said there was a chance of clouds appearing at various altitudes on Wednesday and a possibility of scattered showers in the northern and central parts of Jordan.

Scattered showers fell on Jordan Thursday evening and Friday, indicating an improvement in the amount of rainfall in the Kingdom, which until the end of February was far below the annual average.

Naour man found stabbed to death

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police in Naour are investigating the mysterious death of a 57-year-old man who was found stabbed in his bed Wednesday evening, police reports said.

Ibrahim Abdul Hafez, a close friend of the victim, told police he became concerned about his friend, Salem Ali, when he did not report to work for several days.

Mr. Abdul Hafez told police he went to the victim's house with some of his colleagues from work to check on Mr. Ali. He said that when they asked Ali's mother about her son, the mother went to check on him at his home nearby and discovered her son's body.

The mother told police her son was separated from his wife and lived in a small apartment, while his wife lived with her.

Preliminary investigations by police indicated that Mr. Ali had recently sold a piece of land he owned for JD120,000 and kept the money in a bank.

The authorities did not try to link the murder to the money or the land sale, but a police official told the Jordan Times that it is possible that money or the real estate deal may have something to do with the case.

Criminal investigators who examined the body and the scene of crime said there was a tie wrapped tight around Mr. Ali's neck. In their report they said Mr. Ali's body received several stabs in the stomach and heart.

As of Friday evening, police were still investigating the crime and searching for the murder weapon.

Shooting on the road

A driver of a pick-up truck on his way to Salt from Wadi Shueib reported to police Thursday that he was shot at by another pick-up driver for failing to allow the other driver to overtake him on the two-lane Wadi Shueib Road, a police report said.

Khalaf Ahmad (35) told police that a pick-up truck driver started bumping and hitting his truck from the back, then fired gunshots at Mr. Ahmad. Mr. Ahmad continued driving until he reached the Salt police station and reported the incident.

Police searched for and arrested a 29-year-old man identified as M.S., who the report said, confessed to firing several shots to scare Mr. Ahmad because he claimed Mr. Ahmad refused to allow him to overtake him on Wadi Shueib Road.

A police official said both men are being detained by police.

AMMAN — A senior Jordanian official on Friday denied that the Iraqi ministry of transport had taken a decision to exclude private Jordanian truckowners from transporting Iraq-bound imports through Aqaba and local operators had misunderstood an administrative move by the Iraqi ministry.

Aviad Al Tal, secretary-general of the Jordanian Ministry of Transport, said the decision only meant that all trucks carrying Iraq-bound cargo from Aqaba should approach the Iraqi-Jordanian Land Transport Company (IJLTC) rather than a coordinating office of the Iraqi government at the port for their cargo manifest.

"There was no Iraqi ministry of transport decision to exclude the Jordanian private sector operators from transporting goods from Aqaba to Iraq," Mr. Tal told the Jordan Times Friday. "Local operators misunderstood the administrative decision to shift the manifest handling procedures to the IJLTC and hence the outcry."

Mr. Tal was referring to a memo sent by private transport owners to the Ministry of Transport complaining that the purported Iraqi decision meant a severe blow to them.

Their inference, according to reports in the local press, was that the Iraqi ministry of transport was seeking to limit all transport operations of Iraq-bound cargo to the IJLTC, which is owned by the Jordanian and Iraqi governments, and cut out the private sector from Iraq-related operations, a mainstay income for the Jordanian transport industry.

Mr. Tal said his information that there was no such decision except the administrative move came after contacts with all parties concerned.

"There is no change at all over the status of the Jordanian private sector operators or anyone else for that matter," he told the Jordan Times. "Everything is as they were previously."

Iraqi sources also said that they were not aware of any decision to limit transport of Iraq-bound goods to the IJLTC.

"There has been concern in Baghdad that the company was not doing well following the imposition of the sanctions against Iraq," said an informed Iraqi source, referring to the sweeping trade embargo that the United Nations Security Council slapped on Iraq following the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

"But the concerns have changed with the company's performance during 1993," added the source.

After reporting a loss in 1992, the IJLTC reported a JD 3 million profit for 1993 at a meeting of the company's board of directors in Baghdad in February.

By virtue of its constitution, the company board is chaired by the ministers of transport of Iraq and Jordan.

Transport Minister Aqel Halasa, who attended the Baghdad meetings in February, was not available for comment on Friday since he was out of the country.

The IJLTC taking charge of the handling of cargo manifest with truck-owners as well as the Jordanian-Iraqi border post at Trebil could mean a loss for the local sector if the company exercised discrimination and refused to issue manifests to non-IJLTC trucks.

But, the company owns only 420 trucks, far below the actual number that is needed for a regular flow of cargo unloaded at Aqaba port, industry sources noted.

According to Mr. Tal, there are between 6,000 and 7,000 Jordanian trucks, most of them engaging in plying Iraq-bound cargo from Aqaba as well as Jordanian companies which supply food and medicine to Iraq (food and medicine are exempted from the sanctions against Iraq).

The concern of Jordanian truck operators came after Iraq's Umm Qasr port in the Gulf also had a negative impact on the volume of Iraq-bound cargo being brought to Aqaba for land transport to Iraq.

According to Mr. Halasa and other Jordanian and Iraqi officials, Baghdad has assured Amman that it had no intention to divert all Iraqi imports to Umm Qasr and that there will be a minimum level of Iraq-bound cargo coming through Aqaba.

Shipowners are reluctant to send their vessels to Umm Qasr for several reasons, starting with fears of left-over mines from the 1988 Iran-Iraq War and the 1991 war over Kuwait. High premiums charged by insurance companies which continue to list Umm Qasr as a potentially perilous port.

The United Nations reportedly approved a recent Iraqi request to open a shuttle freighter service between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Umm Qasr, which the Iraqi authorities cleared and declared ready to receive ships in November last year.

Scant details are available on the service, but shipping circles here believe that large freighters that cannot be handled at Umm Qasr — which can only handle ships under a 25,000 tonne capacity — will be diverted to one of the UAE ports where the cargo could be split up and loaded on to smaller vessels and sent to Umm Qasr.

According to shipping sources in the Gulf, an average of two ships pass through the Gulf to Umm Qasr every week, all of them under the 25,000-tonne capacity that the port could accommodate.

They mostly originate in the Far East and carry food items — wheat from Australia, rice from Thailand and Vietnam etc.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

- EXHIBITIONS**
- ★ Book exhibition at the Safeway International.
 - ★ Art exhibition by artist Jalal Arizat at Ab'ad Art Gallery (10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. except Fridays).
 - ★ Wood carving exhibition by artist Samer Ousama at the French Cultural Centre.
 - ★ "Permanent" exhibition of 54 Arab contemporary artists at Darat Al Fann of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation in Jabal Lweibdeh (Tel. 643251/2).
 - ★ Art exhibition by several Iraqi and Jordanian artists at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).
- FILM**
- ★ Film in French entitled "Le Chevre" at the French Cultural Centre on Monday March 14 at 8:00 p.m.
- ABC WEEKLY NEWS**
- ★ ABC Weekly News Highlights and the MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour at the American Center on Tuesday March 15 at 5:00 p.m.

Israel disarms Jews at wall

(Continued from page 1)

ish enclave.

Israeli troops responded with bullets and teargas. Sixteen Palestinians were wounded and two dozen were treated for teargas inhalation.

Thursday's attack came after a curfew was lifted briefly. Protesters screaming "Settlers out" set tyres ablaze and rolled them towards army positions. Protests also erupted near the Tomb of the Patriarchs.

Palestinians with slingshots hurled stones at soldiers protecting the Beit Hadassah settler compound. The troops fired teargas, live ammunition and rubber bullets into groups of Palestinians.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) wants Beit Hadassah and several other settlements evacuated to ease tension and clear the way for resuming Israel-PLO peace talks.

PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin were expected to meet in Washington within two weeks to try to get the talks back on track, Palestinian sources said Thursday.

Thursday's violence began after the army lifted the curfew for two hours to allow Palestinians to shop for this weekend's 'Eid Al Fitr holiday.

Noam Arnon, a spokesman for the 450 settlers in Hebron, said Palestinians used mosque loudspeakers overnight to threaten the settlers in Hebrew. "Your day will come, and we will destroy all of you," he quoted the message as saying.

Beit Hadassah resident Danoy Hizmy said the army asked settlers to stay indoors while the curfew was lifted, but several defied the request to show they could not be cowed.

Elsewhere, Israeli troops shot and killed an 18-year-old Palestinian, Musa Dawas, during a clash Thursday in the Dier Al Balah refugee camp in the occupied Gaza Strip.

A Jewish family moved into the Israeli enclave in the heart of Hebron on Friday.

Police charged three Jewish settlers from neighbouring Kiryat Arba who had publicly lauded the mosque killings.

The three — Shmuel Ben-Yishai, Amnon Tadmor, and Aryeh Ben-Yosef — were charged under the prevention of terrorism act, a police spokesman said.

Official says no Iraqi move to exclude Jordanian truckers

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A senior Jordanian official on Friday denied that the Iraqi ministry of transport had taken a decision to exclude private Jordanian truckowners from transporting Iraq-bound imports through Aqaba and local operators had misunderstood an administrative move by the Iraqi ministry.

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Mr. Tal was referring to a memo sent by private transport owners to the Ministry of Transport complaining that the purported Iraqi decision meant a severe blow to them.

Their inference, according to reports in the local press, was that the Iraqi ministry of transport was seeking to limit all transport operations of Iraq-bound cargo to the IJLTC, which is owned by the Jordanian and Iraqi governments, and cut out the private sector from Iraq-related operations, a mainstay income for the Jordanian transport industry.

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Bagga camp Zakat Committee head Omar Tabaza Thursday receives a donation to the fund from Japanese Ambassador to Jordan Yuji Ikeda (Petra photo)

JNRCS receives equipment from Germany and Japan

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) Friday received \$384,000 worth of equipment from Germany for the expansion of the society's Hilal Hospital in Amman, according to JNRCS President Mohammad Hadid. Dr. Hadid told the Jordan Times that the equipment will be used in the operation theatres at the new facilities expected to be completed in three months.

He said the expansion will raise the hospital's capacity from 63 to 150 beds.

The society Thursday signed an agreement with Japan for a donation of \$50,000 worth of equipment to the Hilal Hospital.

The agreement, which was signed by Dr. Hadid and Japanese Ambassador to Jordan Yuji Ikeda, stipulates that the equipment is to be used at the hospital's maternity care unit.

Dr. Hadid said the donation was the second by Japan to the JNRCS.

Last year, he said, the Japanese Red Cross donated an X-ray unit worth \$250,000, and Mr. Ikeda, he added, has promised more aid over the coming years.

Accompanied by Dr. Hadid, Mr. Ikeda toured the hospital's different sections and inspected the work on the expansion project.

Dr. Hadid voiced appreciation to the German and Japanese governments for their assistance.

Also Thursday, Mr. Ikeda signed an agreement for a \$57,000 donation to the charitable clinic of the Zakat and Alms Committee in Bagga camp which offers free medical services to 600 Palestinian refugee families.

The donation will be used to purchase equipment including an electrocardiograph and a portable X-ray.

Mr. Tabaza, head of the zakat committee, thanked the ambassador for the donation, noting that the clinic offers 24-hour service to the local residents.

Mr. Ikeda also signed an agreement pledging to build and equip Mothers' Bakery, a bakery in Bagga camp which will be established by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) as an income-generating establishment for camp residents.

The bakery will be operated by the mothers of disabled children in the camp.

Conflict risk reduced in Yemen

(Continued from page 1)

Yemeni people.

"Almost all forces have returned to their bases," he added.

Omani Major-General Abdul Aalem Mustahil said all unauthorised checkpoints and road-blocks, set up in recent weeks by rival army units, had been removed.

Beidh signed an accord in Jordan in February providing for political, economic, military and administrative reforms.

Gen. Kameel expressed the hope the first stage would give Yemeni authorities "ample time to review their attitudes and reorganise their home in a way serving the interests of the Yemeni people."

"All forces which moved during the recent clashes have now gone back to their original positions," he said.

Mr. Saleh merged his conservative North Yemen with the former Marxist South Yemen, led by Mr. Beidh, in May 1990 but differences erupted last August between the two leaders paralysing the government of the impoverished country.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

- King receives cable from Sultan of Brunei**
- AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Friday received a telephone call from Sultan Hassanah Bolkiah of Brunei, congratulating him on Eid Al Fitr and his performing of the Umra to Mecca.
- Crown Prince praises armed forces**
- AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Thursday stressed Jordan's pivotal role in the region and lauded the Jordanian Armed Forces in ensuring stability. During a visit to the 12th Royal Mechanised Division, Prince Hassan said His Majesty King Hussein directs special attention to the armed forces and to the retired servicemen, who constitute a supporting army. The Crown Prince noted the armed forces' contribution to maintaining world peace through participation in the United Nations peace-keeping forces, saying there are increasing demands for such efforts by the Kingdom's soldiers.
- Britain to grant Jordan £ 1.2m**
- AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan and Britain Thursday signed two memoranda of understanding under which the British government will give Jordan two grants. The first will be £712,000 to provide drilling equipment for Al Disi Water Basin in the south of Jordan. The second grant of £488,000 will be used to finance additional consultancy services on Al Disi Water Basin. The memoranda were signed by Planning Minister Ziad Fariz and British Ambassador to Jordan Peter Robert Hinchcliff.
- Jordan to participate in Dubai commercial exhibit**
- AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan along with 19 Arab and foreign countries will take part in the International Commercial Spring Exhibition, which will be held March 16 in Dubai, according to Halim Aho Rahmeh, the executive director of the Jordanian Exporters Society (JES). Mr. Aho Rahmeh said 19 Jordanian industries will take part in the exhibition, scheduled to last five days. He said the exhibition will provide a good opportunity for introducing high-quality Jordanian industries to participating countries.
- Computer science specialisation accredited**
- AMMAN (J.T.) — The computer science specialisation at Princess Sumaya University College for Technology has been accredited by the Higher Education Council. The college was established in 1991 offering courses in computer science, leading to the bachelor degree. In 1993, it opened a new field of specialisation, namely electronics engineering, thus awarding the bachelor degree in both specialisations.

Jordan Times

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Dismay can't blur vision

THE JORDAN media and political parties have by and large refrained from commenting on Saudi Arabian King Fahd's failure to meet with His Majesty King Hussein during the monarch's performance of the Umra on Tuesday. By not addressing the visit and its ramifications, which have naturally been of tremendous interest to our public, our politicians and commentators have failed to live up to people's expectations and forfeited an important role they have long claimed for themselves in reflecting public opinion and concerns.

There are reasons, of course, which might be cited by the two groups in justification of this posture. The first is the attempt by senior officials to downplay the political significance of the trip to Saudi Arabia, which is evident in the official coverage of the event. If the government maintains that the visit was undertaken for purely religious purposes, how can, why should, the politicians and journalists themselves attach political significance to it? The second reason, which some journalists at least are citing, is simply that "we were blamed before for not giving the Saudi-Jordanian reconciliation its due chance (recall what the prime minister said on this score on Jan. 10); what should we be expected to do now?" "Those journalists reason that should relations be further strained, or another attempt at mending fences be thwarted in the future, they might be held responsible. The government, though it did indeed play down the political import of the visit, which it has the right to do anyway, has wisely stayed out of the unofficial media's way this time. And it is to its credit that it tried to tell nobody what to do. A third reason might be that "Jordan, being a small country, cannot afford an escalation with Saudi Arabia, or any other country for that matter, and we must not take things personally anyway."

These could be plausible justifications for a passive attitude towards what might otherwise be regarded as a blatant disregard for our feelings as Jordanians by King Fahd, who chose not to show traditional Saudi courtesy towards our King. But real as these justifications may seem, they are not good enough to satisfy the widespread dismay which is gripping our people, right across the board.

Jordan did not see eye to eye with Saudi Arabia during the Gulf crisis and war, it is true. But neither our King nor his people should have been faulted by any Arab for rejecting the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and at the same time calling for an Arab solution to the crisis. What is more, His Majesty has repeatedly expressed his willingness to apologise for any personal offence he might have committed against the Saudi monarch. King Fahd might think he had every reason to break with tradition and not receive a visiting head of state while performing the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. But he should know that not one Jordanian feels he had the right or justification to ignore the presence in the same town of a brother and a long-time ally, even though differences between them might still exist.

The people of Jordan, we would like to inform him, are offended by his attitude, not only because he broke with Arab tradition of hospitality and magnanimity, but also because holding grudges and dwelling on past differences will not solve problems, especially among Arabs who are fighting for their political survival as a nation seeking prosperity and progress. Being hurt will not make us petty and vengeful, however. We will pursue the goal of unity and harmony with all our Arab brethren under all circumstances, but with our heads held high.

His Majesty, the symbol of this country for many years past and to come, is well-recognized for his magnanimity and total commitment to serving the Arab cause. His ability and willingness to forgive and forget an unceremonious behaviour by any brother is beyond doubt. We should expect King Fahd too will want to open a new page in relations with Jordan. Continued estrangement between us is purposeless at best.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

IT IS NOT enough for the U.N. Security Council to issue a statement condemning the Israeli crime in Hebron of last month because this would not solve any problem, said Al Ra'i daily. The paper said what is required is a world community action to end the occupation and end the suffering of the Palestinian people. Here words of sympathy can be by no means appease the Arab and Muslim masses in Palestine and elsewhere of Arab world. It is regrettable to say that the official Palestinian stand, by their with the stands of the Arab and Islamic regimes, which failed to support a meaningful action by the United Nations to deal with the issue, no doubt encouraged the Israelis to pursue their atrocities against the Arabs and Muslims. To desecrate their holy places, said the paper. The Arab world's lack of action vis-a-vis the Israeli atrocities in the occupied territories over the years has opened the door wide for the Europeans and the Americans to pursue their hostile actions against the Muslims in Bosnia, Palestine and elsewhere, added the paper. U.S. President Bill Clinton is determined to maintain the embargo on Iraq, accusing the country of not fully abiding by the U.N. resolutions, but he is doing nothing to stem Israel's atrocities or force it to comply with the U.N. resolutions which call for an end to occupation, said the daily. The paper said that the United States has proved it is against any move on the part of Muslims and Arabs regain their rights.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dostour called on the Arab masses to extend medical and other relief supplies to their brothers in the occupied Arab territories on a regular basis as long as they continually face malpractices and massacres at the hand of the Israeli authorities and settlers. Mohammad Kawash said the massacre in Hebron has proved that hospitals in the occupied lands lack basic medical supplies of all kind. Since 1967, the medical services there have been deteriorating while the Israeli authorities have been preventing the Arabs from improving conditions in hospitals and health centres, said the writer. The continuous occupation and the continued attacks of Israeli troops on the Arabs are bound to cause many victims and deaths, there is desperate need for sending shipments of medical supplies to help doctors deal with the situation, said the writer. He said several specialised agencies and institutions would be more than ready to help achieve this goal and alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people.

JORDANIAN PERSPECTIVE

Time for hard decisions, fresh strategies

By Dr. Musa Kellani

THREE EVENTS in the past two weeks, starting with the Hebron massacre, the Israeli and American behaviour that followed it and His Majesty King Hussein's visit to Mecca, were distinct eyeopeners for Jordan. They warrant a very close reassessment of Jordan's open-hearted approach to regional and international relations with a view to coming up with a new political strategy towards achieving the elusive Arab-Israeli peace based on justice and fairness for all while asserting the Kingdom's national interests as a sovereign country.

The massacre of dozens of Palestinians in the Ibrahim Mosque in the occupied West Bank town of Hebron on Feb. 25 seriously undermined the very concept of coexistence as the basis for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It proved that the implementation of the Sept. 13 autonomy agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) cannot go ahead under the present situation in the occupied territories. It showed that extremist Jewish settlers in the occupied territories are hell-bent upon wrecking the peace process even if it takes cold-blooded slaughter of human beings in holy places.

Indeed, the PLO has to deal with the situation in its capacity as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and as the party which signed the Sept. 13 accord. But, to say the least, Jordan cannot adopt a stand leaving the PLO to grapple with the aftermath of the killing since the reverberations of the massacre have serious implications on the internal situation in the Kingdom as well as the course of the overall Middle East peace negotiations. The Jordanian-initiated Arab suspension of the bilateral talks in Washington was not a simple gesture of expressing solidarity with the PLO's post-Hebron position; it underlined the Kingdom's sincere feelings of grief over the massacre of Palestinian brothers in the occupied territories and the realisation of the futility of continuing negotiations with Israel when the Israelis themselves prove that they are in no mood to abide by any of the agreements that might be reached in the negotiations.

Granted, Jordan is fully committed to a negotiated settlement with Israel and would like to achieve agreements as soon as possible. But it will not move an inch as long as Israeli-planted and Israeli-subsidised and Israeli-protected extremists run amok in the occupied territories and murder Palestinians at will. There has to be a just and fair solution to the problem based on guarantees that the Hebron massacre was the last of such violence that the Israelis are well known for since they came to the Middle East staking a claim to a "promised land."

The PLO has to achieve such a solution and guarantees in whatever means it finds fit. Jordan is willing to extend

wholehearted support to the PLO's quest, but will take up issue with the PLO leadership if it appears that it is settling for anything less than iron-clad arrangements that would preempt more massacres and random settler violence against the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

There is a very thin drawing line here. By adopting a position that the PLO should secure iron-clad preventive arrangements to avert massacre of Palestinians, Jordan is not casting a shadow of the PLO's representative status. On the contrary, the Kingdom is only reinforcing the call of the Palestinian people at large for protection for its constituents under occupation. Don't let anyone forget or overlook the demonstrations and the incidents of violence that erupted in Jordanian territory in the wake of the killings. The situation remained very much under control only because of the democracy that has taken strong roots in the Jordanian society

"Jordan is fully committed to a negotiated settlement with Israel and would like to achieve agreements as soon as possible. But it will not move an inch as long as Israeli-planted and Israeli-subsidised and Israeli-protected extremists run amok in the occupied territories and murder Palestinians at will."

and because of the determination of the leadership to preempt any challenge to internal security while affording the people every chance to express their sentiments through democratic means (and those do not include attempts to endanger lives or attacks on public property).

Here is where the first element that warrants a review of the Jordanian strategy. While living up to its commitment to respect the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, Jordan has to emphasise that no action of the PLO should be detrimental to the Kingdom's security and stability and that Amman would not support any measure that falls short of preempting recurrence of incidents such as the Hebron massacre which have a chain reaction in Jordanian territory.

The second eyeopener for Jordan was Israeli and American reactions to the Hebron massacre, underlining the reality that nothing has changed in so-called strategic relationship be-

tween Washington and Tel Aviv — though we would have thought that the peace process had brought about an increased sense of justice and fairness in the U.S. stand vis-a-vis the Middle East.

The American procrastination over a Security Council resolution over the Hebron killings proved to us not only that nothing has changed in the U.S.-Israeli relationship but also that Washington is more committed to dancing to the tunes of Israeli interests regardless of the cost. President Bill Clinton has an opportunity to tell us differently, if he chooses to do so, when he meets Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin at the White House on Monday. We will keep our eyes peeled.

The continuing siege of Aqaba, depressing the Jordanian economy and posing major hurdles to its imports and exports, is another pointer to the unchanged American attitude, given the fact that goods entering Iraq through Turkey is at least six times more than that passing through Aqaba, Jordan has but only one conclusion: The de facto blockade of Aqaba is not aimed at Iraq inasmuch as it is directed at Jordan.

The third eyeopener for Jordan since Feb. 25 was His Majesty King Hussein's pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia. An opportunity was lost for Arab reconciliation. The King's visit to the Islamic holy shrines in Saudi Arabia was a more-than-halfway gesture in the spirit of brotherhood and essence of Arab solidarity, but others failed to walk the other half. We know our King and his genuine feelings and his record of principled pan-Arab positions, and we will not allow anyone to raise any questions on the sincerity of his approaches to issues.

Personally, I consider the failure of others to reciprocate our Monarch's magnanimous gesture as an insult to Jordan and a slap in my face, me being a Jordanian whom our Monarch represented. But then this is not a time to vent personal anger and frustration over the failure of others to appreciate the genuine feelings of brotherhood and the sense of urgency for Arab solidarity in the face of adversity that prompted King Hussein to undertake that trip to Saudi Arabia for nearly four years. We can only hope that those who chose not to rise to the occasion would, sooner or later, realise their shortcoming and make amends.

But, in the meantime, Jordan's belief that things would fall into place as we go along further towards peace needs a closer scrutiny with a view to ensuring that we depend on ourselves to fill in the gaps where people fail to step in.

Hard decisions will have to be made and hard measures, away from the much-too-flexible liberal, open-hearted approach, may have to be taken.

But then it is the time for hard decisions.



THE WEEK IN PRINT

Government must help farmers, consumers; peace talks shouldn't resume unless Palestinians are protected

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS. repercussions of the Hebron massacre and the prospects for a Middle East peace in light of recent developments dominated editorials and columns in the local Arab press in the past week.

A columnist in Al Ra'i reflected on the threatened strike by farmers of the Jordan Valley who complain against the alleged government's indifference to their plight. We had expected the Minister of Agriculture to discuss ways for solving the farmers' problems in his statement about the agricultural sector before Parliament, said Usama Sha'sha'a. He said that the minister presented a four-part rhetorical statement that failed to tackle the real problems facing the farmers. The minister failed to discuss problems related to harvest patterns, water distributions, marketing of crops and many other matters of concern to the farmers, added the writer.

A columnist in Al Dostour said that insurance companies operating in Jordan are greedy and they are now threatening to stop insuring cars unless the government takes steps to raise the insurance premiums paid by car owners. Mohammad Subeini said that these companies, which claim they lose huge sums at the current rate of premiums, have earlier published reports noting that their total revenue in 1993 amounted to JD 2010 million, four times the amount of their capital. The writer said that the government, which has prevented new insurance

companies from operating for a long time, ought to pass new legislations curtailing the greed of the insurance companies to serve public interest.

A columnist in Al Ra'i demanded that foreign domestic help who care for the elderly and the handicapped persons should be exempted from paying the JD 300 fee to the government annually.

Commenting on the sales tax draft law, Salameh Ekour, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab, said that none of the political parties or the heads of Parliamentary blocs opposing the sales tax have presented to the public a detailed study to justify its rejection. The writer said that at the same time, the merchants are bound to raise the prices of various commodities once they have learned that Parliament has approved the law, while the government is doing nothing to come to the help of the consumers. The writer said the public should be convinced by the new measure on the one hand and must see the government taking steps to protect its interest on the other.

Taher Al Adwan, a columnist in Al Dostour, said that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has often reported that Jordan was among the main Third World nations that abide by its instructions to reduce the external debts and carry out reform programmes for its economy. But, said the writer, the IMF has taken no steps towards alleviating the burden of debts facing the Kingdom.

Reflecting on the Hebron massacre and the continued repression and killing of Palestinians, Mohammad Kawash, a columnist in Al Dostour, said that the Israelis are committing crimes far more brutal than those committed by the Nazis. He said that the United Nations, which to date failed to condemn the massacre, seems to be condoning the crime and its silence means encouraging the settlers and the terrorist groups in Israel to pursue their actions. The writer demanded an immediate action, a dismantling of the settlements and end of occupation.

Tareq Masarweb, a columnist in Al Ra'i, said that the wave of anger against the despicable crime in Hebron should continue by all forms and means. The crime triggered violent demonstrations in Cairo and Istanbul and Indonesia as well as a firing incident against Jews in New York. All these actions are natural reactions to the offence to the Muslim's feelings and the sacrifice of their holy shrines, he said. The Arabs and Muslims, he said, should not remain passive against Israel's atrocities but should expose their actions to the whole world.

Taher Al Adwan agreed with this view, saying that the strong reactions to the crime prompted the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to suspend the peace negotiations with the Israelis until the world community and the United States have adopted a positive stand with regard to occupation. The writer said that the crime has also boosted the

intifada and Palestinians' determination to regain their right, and has prompted the Arab parties to the peace talks to postpone them indefinitely. The suspension of the talks was necessary because Israel has been exploiting the negotiations on the one hand and pursuing acts of crime on the other.

Arafat Hijazi, a columnist in Sawt Al Shaab, criticised Nabil Shaath, the PLO negotiator with Israel, over a statement that the United States and Israel were working out a plan to provide protection to the Palestinians. The writer said that as long as the settlements exist in Palestine, there can be no safety for the Palestinians. It is not enough to disarm a group of the settlers since the Israeli government continues to support their actions and provide arms to others to attack Arabs, he added.

Hosni Ayyesh, a columnist in Al Ra'i, said that the crime at Hebron is a setback to the PLO an excuse for correcting its wrong steps of the past and withdraw from further talks with Israel.

Washington's stand vis-a-vis the crime at Hebron exposed anew America's bias towards Israel, said Ibrahim Al Absi, a columnist in Al Ra'i. The writer said that the United States is preventing the U.N. Security Council from condemning the crime and is still claiming to be peace mediator between the Arabs and Israel. The crime committed in Hebron showed beyond doubt that the Arabs must give up the U.S.-sponsored talks with their common enemy.

Northern Irish Catholics edge towards majority, but not in votes

By Jade Webber
Reuter

LARNE, Northern Ireland — There could soon be more Roman Catholics than Protestants in Northern Ireland, but demographers say that doesn't mean the end of British rule in the province.

They say a Catholic majority will not automatically ditch the material benefits of being part of Britain by voting nationalist, as some sections of the protestant population fear.

"If present demographic rates persist, they will not deliver a Catholic majority in significant enough numbers to bring about a Catholic nationalist vote," said John Power, lecturer in demography at Belfast's Queen's University.

"It's just not on the cards. The Catholic middle class is unlikely to cut off its nose (spite itself) by joining a united Ireland... Union (with Britain) per se is very unlikely to be threatened by Catholic growth rates."

The number of Catholics in Northern Ireland has been creeping up steadily in the past two decades while the Irish Republican Army (IRA) has been fighting to end British rule and reunite with Catholic Ireland.

Forty-two per cent of northern Ireland's 1.5 million people are now Catholic, an increase from just over 31 per cent in the 1971 census and about 39 per cent in 1981 — although experts say those figures may be flawed because heavy IRA violence probably deterred Catholics from filling in census forms.

Even though Catholics have high emigration rates and there are signs that their birthrate is beginning to slow, demographers say protestants could find themselves outnumbered in 30-40 years.

Catholics could have a voting majority 15-20 years later. But British rule brings cash to the province and a high standard of living for middle-class Catholics.

London pumps three billion pounds (\$4.4 billion) a year into the province and many fear reunification would mean not only the end of that cash, but also a fall to the economic level of the neighbouring Irish Republic.

Britain conquered the whole island of Ireland in the 12th century but the threat of rebellion lingered in stubbornly Gaelic-speaking, Catholic areas. Britain's radical solution was to transplant English and Scottish Protestant settlers in the 17th century.

Within 100 years, protestants owned 90 per cent of the land and by the turn of the 20th

century, they controlled the best jobs and had the most status in the country's newly affluent, industrialised north-eastern corner of the island.

Britain was forced to give back two-thirds of the island in 1921 after a bitter war, keeping only the six northern counties where Protestants held sway. The other 26 became the Irish Republic.

Northern Ireland's shrinking Protestant majority has clung to "union" with Britain. Some fear that rising Catholic numbers and a new Anglo-Irish peace plan that gives all people on the island a say in its future could spell the end for them.

The Port of Larne is typical. Kerbs are painted in British red, white and blue and walls are covered in graffiti recalling a glorious Protestant past.

"No surrender" proclaims a patriotic mural. "God save our queen."

Hardline Democratic Unionist Party leader Ian Paisley last year even called on Protestant women to breed for the province.

But his are extreme views, said Chris McGimpsey of Northern Ireland's Ulster Unionist Party (UUP).

"If there were 50 per cent Roman Catholics tomorrow, the sky wouldn't fall in," he said. "Northern Ireland wouldn't be made part of the Irish Republic."

Mr. McGimpsey said the UUP reckoned that 80 per cent of Catholics wanted to remain within the union. A Catholic majority would not matter, he said. "It just isn't an issue."

Queens University History professor Paul Bew agreed. "I do think the demographic question is fading," he said, pointing to the political divide at the last general election in 1992.

Sixty-five per cent of the population voted pro-union and the nationalist vote was only 35 per cent, he said.

"We know there are Catholics who would never get — the Catholics who are unionists with a small 'u'," admitted chairman Mark Durkan of the province's biggest nationalist bloc, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP).

The other nationalist party, the IRA's political wing, Sinn Fein, supports violence in the pursuit of Irish reunification but captures only about two per cent of the vote in the whole of Ireland.

But if Anglo-Irish peace plans succeed and the IRA abandons violence, experts say nationalist parties could be pivotal to reconciling the island's divided Christian traditions.

"Once a Catholic majority occurs, that will be very important, even if it does not bring about a nationalist agenda," Mr. Power concluded.

By Abraham Rabinovich

In the beginning was the min-

Long before he administered his satanic potion in the dawn darkness Feb. 25 in Hebron, Baruch Goldstein had adopted a world view shared by a small group of religious Jews identified with Rabbi Meir Kahane.

What bound these people, however, had nothing to do with Judaism, says Aviczer Ravitsky, professor of Jewish thought at the Hebrew University.

"These are people who define themselves by confrontation," he said in an interview this week. "It is a universal phenomenon. You will find such people in every society, in every religion — people who believe they are acting ideologically but in fact define themselves by struggle with The Other."

Kahane himself had begun his public career in the U.S. by campaigning against blacks. He then turned his attention to the Soviets and Christian missionaries. When he arrived in Israel he took on the Black Hebrews before discovering the Arabs.

Dr. Ravitsky has read 12 books and pamphlets written by Kahane in an attempt to plumb his ideology. "It's very difficult to find anything in them that is positive. It's always confrontational."

Mussolini defined a nation as people who fight together, notes Dr. Ravitsky. "If I have an enemy, I know who I am," explains the professor. "I am different from the other. I am superior to the other. You don't need Judaism to understand Kahanism. Kahanism is the Jewish expression of a universal phenomenon. We saw the same thing in the Europe of the 1930s. I don't speak about Nazism." It is a drive, he believes, that feeds on an internal emptiness.

Kahanism is a terrible problem, Dr. Ravitsky believes, but not a serious problem. "They might draw a few thousand votes in an election but the hard-core activists number perhaps 100 to 200. We as a people can handle it." Far more serious, in his view, is the increasing radicalisation within Gush Emunim, the driving force behind settlement in the occupied

Israeli boys lay flowers on the tomb of Baruch Goldstein in the settlement of Kiryat Arba in the occupied city of Hebron (AFP photo)



Baruch Goldstein: A heritage of hatred

'A Jewish...doctor will take a gun and shoot people in the back as they (kneel) in prayer...and he gets support from some religious figures.'

territories whose supporters number in the tens of thousands.

Dr. Ravitsky, an Orthodox Jew, comes from the same sociological stratum as the leaders of Gush Emunim, many of whom are his contemporaries and friends. He himself is a political dove, his landmark book on the Messianistic right — *Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious Radicalism* — was published a year ago and is already in its third Hebrew printing.

It is important to distinguish between the Kahanists and Gush Emunim, he stresses, even if that distinction is becoming blurred by a rightward drift within Gush Emu-

nim. "Gush Emunim doesn't have an ideology of conflict with the Arabs. If the Arabs would let them have Greater Israel, they wouldn't harm them. The Kahanists on the other hand have an independent goal throwing the Gentiles out of the Land of Israel."

The refusal of the Rabin government to come to grips with Kahanism was a major blunder which has blown up in its face, says Ehud Sprinzak, a Hebrew University political scientist. "The price of tolerating them was not very high," says Dr. Sprinzak. "There was not any great public criticism of them in Israel and abroad. Not even the Palestinians distinguish-

between the crazies in Hebron and the army."

"The pressure was thus out great and most governments respond to pressure, not to worst-case scenarios like the one that actually happened Feb. 25."

While Kach activists may number only a few hundred in Israel, Kahane won 26,000 votes when he ran for the Knesset in 1984, 1.5 per cent of the total. Subsequent polls showed him to have the support of 7 to 10 per cent of the population.

The Kahanists have routinely raided Arab neighborhoods, torching cars, overturning food stalls, shooting solar panels on roofs and beating up people. By

monitoring the army radio net, says Dr. Sprinzak, they were able to operate without interference by patrols.

The army, in fact, is incapable of controlling groups like Kach, he says. "For this you need top-quality police units." A major question is whether the Shin Bet, which monitors the extremists, had recommended a crackdown in the past. If not, says Dr. Sprinzak, it was a Shin Bet blunder. This may be answered by the state inquiry commission investigating the massacre.

Dr. Sprinzak, author of *The Ascendancy of Israel's Radical Right*, says the government crackdown which began this week against right-

wing extremists will likely prove effective if it signals a new policy and is not just a one-time operation.

Unlike the psychological impulses that drive the Kahanists, Gush Emunim is powered by a specific theological view that was propagated in the great study hall of Jerusalem's Mercaz Harav Yeshiva by its head, the late Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Kook.

Confronting the immensity of the Holocaust after World War II, the venerable rabbi came to see the creation of Israel as an ordained event heralding the onset of the Messianic period. The state was created by divine intervention in the wake of "the terrible operation per-

formed by God on the Jewish people before the redemption," as the rabbi put it.

It was a view that attempted to cope in cosmic terms with the cosmic questions raised by the Holocaust. Says Dr. Ravitsky: "If you consider Israel just as a haven for a few million Jews, it cannot balance the Holocaust either psychologically or theologically. But once it becomes a Messianic state, a metahistorical state, there is some sort of balance. Suddenly you have an answer to the Holocaust."

Thus, unlike some rabbis who viewed Zionism as a sacrilegious attempt by secular Jews to revive the Jewish state without the promised Messianic intervention, Rabbi Kook saw the state as a Messianic vehicle.

His students in the 1950s when he first published his views included young men like Moshe Levinger, Haim Druckman and Eliezer Waldman who, as rabbis, would become leaders of Gush Emunim.

In May 1967, during a talk in his yeshiva, Rabbi Kook suddenly began weeping: "Where is our Shechem (Nablus)? Where is our Jericho? Where is our land?"

Three weeks later, his students were in Nablus and Jericho and Hebron as soldiers of a conquering Jewish army. "Can you imagine the impact this had on them?" asks Dr. Ravitsky. "They regarded him almost as a prophet."

The energies released among Rabbi Kook's disciples by the conquest of the biblical heartland were prodigious. They and those who joined them compelled reluctant governments by sheer force of will to undertake the construction of a web of settlements that would become increasingly dense. Armed with their certainties, they danced across the hills of Judea and Samaria with Torah scrolls and the bulldozers followed.

"Gradually," said Dr. Ravitsky, "sovereignty over the land became in their eyes almost the principal value of Judaism. No one could have predicted 20 or 30 years ago that this would happen to religious Zionists. I'm sure if I had told this then to Hanan Porat (one of the more prominent Gush Emunim leaders

who is now a National Religious Party member of Knesset and other friends, they wouldn't have believed."

"This exclusivity...the value led to a loss of sensitivity about other Jewish values, like human life. The belief that we are in the process of inevitable religious redemption, a process that will deistically take us to the final redemption, becomes disastrous."

For two millennia, he says Jews have prayed for a redemption involving a return to Palestine. In some views, the Messiah would lead this process, in others his arrival would be the culmination of the process. Israel would then live in perfect peace with the rest of the world — swords into plowshares.

"Once you have such a consciousness, that you respect the realization of all these dreams, you cannot accept partial solutions," says Dr. Ravitsky. Camp David was a betrayal in the eyes of Gush Emunim not only because of the territorial question, but also because it assumed a grudging peace based on mutual interest, not a true Messianic peace.

The ongoing conflict with the Arabs dictated by such views, argues Dr. Ravitsky, has wrought a tragic price. "The situation is corrupting. What is happening today to Judaism, to Jewish values, is unbelievable. A Jewish person, a doctor, will take a gun and shoot people in the back as they (kneel) in prayer to their God — their God, by the way, is our God, according to Maimonides — and he gets support from some religious figures. This is my nightmare."

He notes the circumcision performed recently at the Western Wall by a Kahane follower who named his son after Goldstein and prayed that he would follow the killer's example.

Dr. Ravitsky hesitates a moment before drawing his final conclusion. "If I believed, God forbid, this is the kind of Judaism there will be, I don't want my grandchild to be Jewish. I say this as a religious person and as someone who has devoted his entire life to educating people to be good and devoted Jews."

The Jerusalem Post

Deputies debate extended session

(Continued from page 1)

readjustment programme.

Sources say the draft law, which was referred to the House by the Financial Com-

mittee which recommended it be approved with the amendments it introduced to it, is a requirement of the International Monetary Fund which engineered the economic readjustment programme.

No-fire-at-Jews order sparks outcry

(Continued from page 1)

this directive was issued it was not foreseen a Jew would massacre Palestinians.

Gen. Moufazz said: "The directive that soldiers do not shoot Jews — because Jews are not the enemy — was given in the context of unrest" in which settlers defend themselves against Arab attack.

"Since we did not foresee a massacre, no directives or instructions were given about opening fire when a massacre is carried out by Jews," he said.

Geo. Moufazz said he was certain that bad troops been present in the prayer hall where Goldstein carried out the slaughter, they would have shot him.

"How can that be clear?" interjected panel member Menachem Yaari, noting the standing instructions not to fire on Jews.

Asked for comment, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told Israeli army radio: "I will not relate to things discussed today at the inquiry commission, whether they be true or not."

At the hearing Colonel Shalom Goldstein, military governor of Hebron, testified that he had alerted Mr. Rabin and other top officials to rising tensions between Palestinians and settlers before the massacre.

Goldstein, no relation to the mosque gunman, described the atmosphere in Hebron over the last year as "very charged."

The testimony before the five-man panel underscored Palestinian demands for international protection in the wake of the massacre.

The commission only has power to make recommendations, but Israeli governments have historically abided by commissions' recommendations.

Other officers confirmed orders not to fire at Jews were

in effect during routine street unrest but maintained they were not meant to prevent security forces from foiling an attack such as Goldstein's.

During the hearing, the commissioner's head, chief supreme court Justice Meir Shamgar, pressed Mr. Tayar on whether a blanket ban on shooting Jews seemed logical. "No so much. I was not 100 per cent comfortable with it," he said, adding that other officers felt the same.

The testimony was likely to spark charges of military negligence in facing down settler violence in the occupied territories. Weeks earlier, the country was shocked by scenes of settlers firing their weapons down a Hebron street while soldiers looked on.

During the six-year Palestinian uprising against occupation, more than 1,270 Palestinians have been killed, most by army gunfire.

The Israeli human-rights B'tselem group asked Thursday to appear before the panel to present information on settler attacks against Arabs. Izhar Beer, a group spokesman, said the evidence would reveal authorities' failure to enforce the law with settlers.

An Israeli newspaper reported Friday that Goldstein himself was involved in an October 1982 attempt to break into the same mosque in which he carried out the massacre.

Zeev Schiff, respected military writer for the Haaretz daily, said defence ministry archives showed Goldstein and two other settlers were disciplined after scuffling with soldiers who barred them from the site while Muslims were at prayer.

Goldstein was subsequently barred from the site for a month, Mr. Schiff wrote. A defence official confirmed Mr. Schiff's account, speaking on condition of anonymity.

U.S. links vote with talks

(Continued from page 1)

orderway at the Security Council to issue a resolution on the massacre." Wafa did not give further details.

A senior PLO official, who asked not to be named, said Mr. Christopher telephoned Mr. Arafat and asked the PLO to resume talks without preconditions or to agree that Palestinian and Israeli officials meet.

"It is clear that by threatening to use the veto, the U.S. administration is exerting pressures (on the PLO) for Israel interests," the official said.

The PLO official said the PLO could agree to a PLO-Israeli meeting after Israel sends its response to Mr. Arafat's demands made last week and after the Security Council adopts its resolution.

"We expect the vote on Friday evening or Saturday... we still don't know how the U.S. administration will vote," PLO Executive Committee member Yasser Abed Rabbo said.

A U.S. official in New York said on Thursday that the United States did not want the council to adopt a resolution that, in addition to condemning the massacre, included what it considers objectionable language, unless this revived peace talks between Israel and the PLO.

Mr. Christopher telephoned Mr. Arafat on Thursday to link adoption of the stalled Security Council resolution with resumption of peace talks with Israel.

"We are in a very fast moving process," a Western diplomat said, commenting on the U.S.-PLO negotiations.

A Security Council vote on the resolution was abruptly postponed Wednesday night at the request of the United States and no action was taken Thursday.

U.N. diplomatic sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, also said Mr. Christopher told Mr. Arafat that the U.S. government would only support the resolution if the PLO made a commitment to resume the talks.

Mr. Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin were expected to meet in Washington, within two weeks to try to overcome the disruption in the peace talks caused by the Hebron massacre, PLO sources

said.

They said the move back towards the talks would start once the Security Council passed the resolution condemning the killing.

Diplomats expect the resolution to be voted upon paragraph-by-paragraph, so that the United States could abstain.

In Amman, PLO officials accused the United States of using the much-delayed Security Council resolution to blackmail their organisation into resuming peace talks with Israel.

"It's an attempt at blackmail of the PLO position and a disregard of the massacre and its repercussions," said Abbas Zaki, a senior commander of Mr. Arafat's mainstream Fatah group and a member of its central committee.

Salah Raftat, member of the PLO Central Council, echoed his thoughts. "The U.S. is exerting all types of pressure on the PLO to resume immediate talks in Washington without tying this to tangible measures on evacuation of some settlements now or letting the issue be put on the agenda of the next talks."

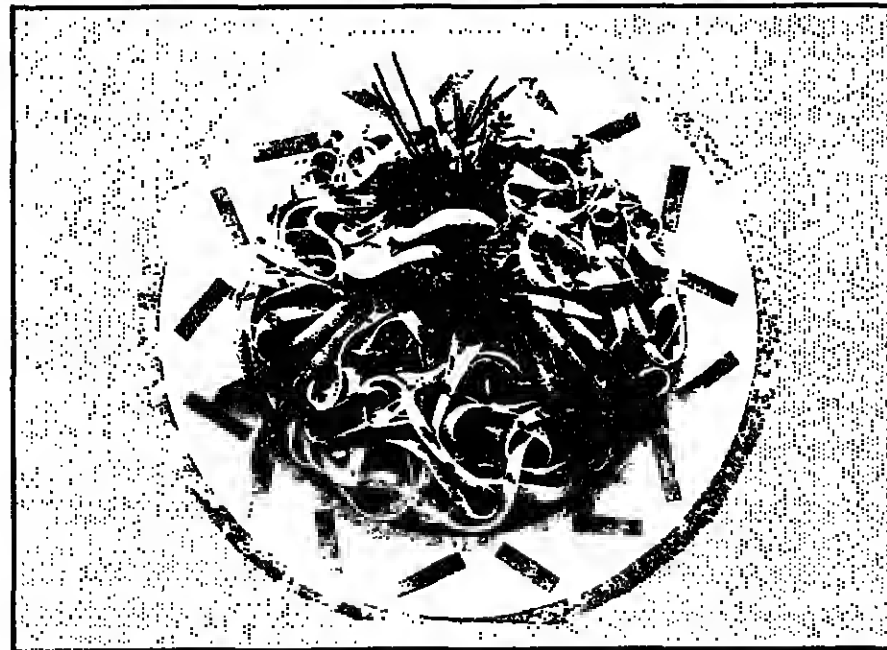
Mr. Zaki said Fatah, the biggest group in the PLO, would convene its top leadership body within a week to work out a common strategy on new terms for resumption of talks.

Any peace talks, he added, would have to discuss the issue of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. "There is consensus within Fatah of not resuming negotiations or returning to the old situation, unless there are measures on the ground on settlements and international protection (of Palestinians in the territories) and a very clear Security Council resolution."

Suleiman Najjah, a senior PLO Executive Committee member, said the U.S. was using delaying tactics to push aside Palestinian demands as though the Hebron massacre had never taken place.

"The present U.S. position is exerting pressure on the PLO to resume talks as though nothing has happened, insisting on aborting new realities the Hebron massacre has brought about," said Mr. Najjah, adding the peace process had come to a "dead end."

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S. African homeland in chaos

Bophuthatswana troops kill 3 white extremists

MMABATHO, South Africa (Agencies) — Soldiers from the black homeland of Bophuthatswana Friday shot to death three white extremists who had come into Bophuthatswana to bolster its government against an uprising by African National Congress (ANC) supporters.

The shootout marked an ominous turn of events in the independent homeland, where protesters have been demanding reincorporation into South Africa.

Bophuthatswana's government lost control of the capital Thursday, but after a night of looting and rioting, it issued a statement Friday afternoon claiming to be back in control. But the latest shooting created a potential three-way battle between pro-apartheid whites, blacks opposed to the homeland rulers, and blacks loyal to the government but opposed to the white extremists.

The South African government has its own troops in Bophuthatswana but has refused to get involved in the crisis. The South African soldiers have been guarding the South African embassy but have not joined in the attempts to quell unrest.

However, the involvement of the right-wing whites — South African citizens — in direct fighting could give President F.W. de Klerk an excuse to order the South African military to take action.

At issue is Bophuthatswana President Lucas Mangope's refusal to take part in South Africa's national election, Mr.

Mangope is a fierce opponent of the ANC — the likely winner of the vote — and has aligned himself with pro-apartheid white parties to fight it and to retain his sovereignty. Armed whites poured into the homeland overnight to help Mr. Mangope after a popular uprising by homeland residents demanding to take part in the vote. Mr. Mangope had welcomed white groups' help but specifically asked that the Afrikaner Resistance Movement not be included.

Friday's shootout occurred when a convoy of vehicles filled with movement members rolled through the capital, Mmabatho. Witnesses said they fired at two vehicles of black, Bophuthatswana soldiers, sparking a gunfight that lasted several minutes.

All the right-wing vehicles sped off except one that was carrying three whites who had been shot. One was dead and two were wounded. But as they lay bleeding, a Bophuthatswana soldier walked up and executed them.

Before dying, the two said all three were members of the Afrikaner Resistance Movement, known by its Afrikaans-language initials A.W.B. The whereabouts of the whites who fled was not known.

ANC President Nelson Mandela earlier Friday demanded South African intervention to quell the unrest. At a campaign rally in Pretoria, he called on the government and the Transitional Executive Council — a multiracial body that works alongside the government — to take control of

Bophuthatswana.

The ANC has accused the government of ignoring the situation to deny the ANC the votes it could get from Bophuthatswana if it were allowed to participate in the April 26-28 vote.

A Bophuthatswana government spokesman, Rowan Cronje, issued a statement saying one person died in Thursday night's rioting, which erupted after many police joined protesters and turned against Mr. Mangope.

A hospital worker in Mmabatho said more than 80 people were admitted with injuries overnight.

The streets of Mmabatho were strewn with the debris of Thursday's rioting. The bloody body of a young man, his face beaten, lay in a graveyard across the road from a looted shopping mall littered with glass and emptied of goods.

Mr. Mangope's whereabouts remained unknown.

There were reports of new clashes Friday elsewhere in Bophuthatswana killing two more people. As the unrest spread, Sun International, which operates nine hotels in Bophuthatswana, closed three Friday because of protests nearby.

The clashes, which began with strikes Monday and erupted in violence Wednesday, were the worst unrest to hit the homeland since it was declared independent in 1977.

Bophuthatswana (pronounced bu-puh-tah-swah-nah) is one of 10 tribal homelands created under apartheid

to confine blacks to remote areas far from white cities. Its declaration of independence gave Mr. Mangope freedom to rule with an iron fist, and critics accused him of brutally repressing political opponents.

The homeland has its own security forces and its own laws, and its 2.5 million people were stripped of South African citizenship and declared citizens of the homeland. No country recognises its sovereignty except South Africa.

Bophuthatswana, the homeland of the Tswana Tribe, boasts large platinum mines and the Sun City gambling resort, host of the Miss World pageant in 1993 and 1992. But it generates only 26 per cent of its own revenue and depends on South African aid for the rest.

Meanwhile the embattled Bophuthatswana president said Friday he will recommend to his parliament that his homeland participate in South Africa's democratic election next month, the homeland government said in a statement.

In Pretoria, President De Klerk said Friday he expected agreement within hours between South Africa and Bophuthatswana to end unrest in the nominally independent homeland.

"I am confident that within the next few hours, a definite arrangement will be made for us to move into Mmabatho and the surrounding areas to stabilise the situation immediately," Mr. De Klerk told a news conference.



Residents shout "free at last" as a police vehicle burns during riots in Mmabatho, the capital of Bophuthatswana, South Africa's only recognised independent homeland (AFP photo)

Christopher in China for rights talks

BEIJING (R) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrived in China Friday, trying to break down Beijing's wall of resistance to making the human rights concessions needed to keep billions of dollars in trade.

Mr. Christopher arrived from Tokyo for the start of a stay that ends Monday.

Chinese police have kept up a steady harassment of dissidents in the days ahead of his visit, clouding the prospects for any breakthrough and ensuring that Mr. Christopher's meetings with top officials will be difficult.

He has repeatedly stated that China must make "overall, significant progress" one human rights if it expects President Bill Clinton to renew the country's most favoured nation trade privileges. Known as MFN, Mr. Clinton must make a decision on MFN by early June.

Businessmen in China, the United States and Hong Kong fear a multibillion-dollar trade war if Mr. Clinton cancels

MFN and Beijing retaliates against U.S. exporters.

China maintains that human rights and trade are separate issues that should not be linked.

Mr. Christopher got backing from 277 members of Congress Friday as he headed for talks in Beijing.

"We continue to be very concerned about China's lack of progress in meeting the human rights conditions," President Clinton has spelled out for renewing U.S. "most favoured nation" (MFN) trade status for China, they wrote.

"(We) urge you to emphasise in your meetings in Beijing the unified message of the administration and Congress regarding the issue of MFN and improving human rights in China and Tibet."

Beijing was the final stop on Mr. Christopher's 12-day trip to Asia and the Pacific.

Meanwhile Shanghai's most prominent dissident, Yang Zhou, was detained by police Friday, his wife told Reuters.

Mr. Yang, a veteran of Chi-

na's pro-democracy movement, was taken from his home by a uniformed officer shortly after Mr. Christopher arrived in China.

Earlier Friday another Shanghai dissident, Wang Fuchen, was picked up by police, a family source said.

Mr. Yang, 50, is a founding member of the Shanghai-based Association for Human Rights and has been battling authorities to allow him to register the organisation.

He was detained for 24 hours last week during a visit to China's largest city by the top U.S. human rights diplomat, John Shattuck. Police then warned him that he would be punished severely unless he changed his ways.

Mr. Yang's wife said a single policeman escorted him from his home Friday evening.

Mr. Yang was one of nine dissidents who signed a "peace charter" in Beijing in November last year calling for political change. He has been in and out of jail regularly for his outspoken defiance of Communist authorities.

U.K. condemns 2nd attack on Heathrow

LONDON (R) — Britain Friday condemned the IRA for launching a second mortar attack on London's Heathrow Airport in just over a day but, said the guerrillas would not be allowed to scuttle the search for peace in Northern Ireland.

Four mortar bombs were fired around midnight and landed without detonating near a building at the fourth terminal of the world's busiest international airport.

Police first thought only three rounds had been fired but discovered a fourth unexploded bomb Friday morning.

As in the first strike some 30 hours earlier, no-one was injured and no serious damage was caused. But Heathrow's southern runway was closed during the night, causing extensive disruptions to early-morning flights.

The attack came within hours of a warning by Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams,

leader of the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) political wing, of more guerrilla spectaculars from time to time to keep pressure on Britain to pull out of Northern Ireland.

Sinn Fein has refused to endorse December's Anglo-Irish joint peace declaration, saying it needed clarification of the offer of a seat at the negotiating table if IRA guerrillas end their violent struggle to end Britain's rule of the province.

Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, in an interview with BBC radio, said the Heathrow attacks had exposed the IRA's hypocrisy.

"These are people who claim to be asking for clarification of this document about democracy."

"In fact they're scaring and killing people, and I hope the devious dishonesty of that is clear to everyone everywhere who might have been taken in

the past," Mr. Hurd said. IRA gunmen shot dead an off-duty policeman while he sat drinking with his wife in the busy bar of a Belfast Greyhound Racing Stadium Thursday night.

On Friday, a man was killed in a predominantly Catholic area of the town of Portadown in Northern Ireland when a bomb exploded in his booby-trapped truck. Security sources said the incident bore the hallmarks of a tit-for-tat revenge killing.

Despite the IRA's taunting twin on Heathrow, Mr. Hurd refused to slam the door completely on Sinn Fein.

Asked where the fresh violence left the joint declaration, he said: "It leaves it as a statement of the two governments that the future of Northern Ireland will not be settled by violence. That the IRA cannot hope to settle it in that way."

Serb missiles reportedly kill 11 in Maglaj

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Bosnian Serbs fired a missile barrage into the desperate Muslim enclave of Maglaj, killing 11 people and flattening eight apartment buildings, Bosnian Radio said Friday.

The radio reported that Russian-made, short-range Luna missiles were used in the attack Thursday.

There was no independent confirmation of the report, which also said 32 people were wounded. Bosnian Serbs encircling Maglaj have prevented U.N. monitors and convoys from reaching the besieged enclave.

A U.N. convoy turned back Thursday just a few kilometres from the city after four days of Serb delaying tactics. Aid officials in Zagreb, Croatia, said new attempts to reach Maglaj would be made next week.

"The Bosnian Serbs are completely intransigent," said Peter Kessler, a U.N. relief agency spokesman in Sarajevo. He said the Serbs were violating an agreement signed by free movement of aid throughout Bosnia.

The U.N. commander in Bosnia, Lt.-Gen. Sir Michael Rose, has pledged to take a tougher line with combatants who interfere with aid convoys.

U.N. mission chief Yasushi Akashi's spokesman, Michael Williams, said there were no plans to use force in the Maglaj case.

The town has been surrounded by Serb and Croat forces for most of the past nine months. U.N. officials who travelled with the last convoy to reach the city in October described it as a "shattered town" of "suffering people" forced to cower in shelters.

Aid planes have dropped tonnes of food in the area, but such deliveries often do not reach their targets. There also have been reports of people killed by shelling and sniper fire while trying to retrieve parcels.

The failure of the convoy to reach Maglaj, coming amid a general improvement in aid deliveries, was a demoralising setback for the U.N. relief effort in Bosnia and it demonstrated that Serb forces can still stop deliveries at will.

Gen. Rose has complained that U.N. peacekeepers already are stretched too thin trying to police the mmth old Sarajevo ceasefire and another that continues to hold between Muslim and Croat forces in central Bosnia.

He has asked for nearly 11,000 additional troops,

Russian Supreme Court orders new 1991 coup trial

MOSCOW (R) — Russia's supreme court ruled Friday that 12 alleged leaders of an August 1991 coup must face a new trial despite a parliamentary amnesty, a court spokesman said.

The original trial, by a military bench of the court, was dropped at the beginning of March in response to an amnesty declared by parliament on Feb. 23 covering all the accused.

The decision to hold a fresh trial followed a protest by the prosecutor-general's office against the dropping of the case.

The court spokesman said the state of the new trial would be decided later by a new bench of judges.

The accused, who include the former Soviet vice-president, prime minister, defence minister, KGB chief and parliament chairman, seized power from the then Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev for three days in August 1991.

Gunmen murder Tajik deputy premier at home

ALMA-ATA (R) — Unknown gunmen have murdered a deputy prime minister in the former Soviet Republic of Tajikistan, riddling his body with bullets, a government spokesman said Friday.

Zafar Saidov said Moyonsho Nazarsboyev was killed by automatic gunfire in the courtyard of his house Thursday night in the Tajik capital Dushanbe. More than 11 bullets punctured his body. Tajikistan has four deputy prime ministers.

"No doubt this evil murder was made by the enemies of the motherland in order to destroy the attempts of the republic's leadership to achieve the unity of people,"

stability and peace in Tajikistan," Mr. Saidov quoted a government statement as saying.

Mr. Saidov, speaking by telephone from Dushanbe, said it was not known who committed the murder.

Mr. Nazarsboyev was a Pamiri, an ethnic minority from the mountainous region of Gorno-Badakhshan in the east of the Central Asian state.

Since a civil war in late 1992, Pamiris have been widely seen as enemies of the dominant clan from Kulyab, several Pamiris were murdered in Dushanbe in the spring and summer of 1993 by unknown killers.

Nixon snubbed again in Russia — by Zhirinovsky

MOSCOW (R) — Former U.S. President Richard Nixon, snubbed by President Boris Yeltsin and the Russian government, found himself cold-shouldered again Thursday — this time by ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky.

ITAR-TASS News Agency quoted a spokesman for the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) as saying its leader Mr. Zhirinovsky was "against" meeting Mr. Nixon. He gave no reasons.

The 81-year-old former U.S. leader had been scheduled to meet Mr. Zhirinovsky who heads one of the largest parliamentary factions but who is extremely unpopular in the West because of his dreams of restoring and expanding the old Russian empire.

Earlier in the day the Kremlin spelled out the reasons for its decision to call off a planned meeting between Mr. Nixon and Mr. Yeltsin because the American had met former Russian Vice-President Alexander Rutskoi.

Mr. Yeltsin, clearly insulted by the courtesy paid to one of his fiercest foes, cancelled his appointment with Mr. Nixon and stopped other government ministers from seeing him.

Mr. Rutskoi was released from prison in February under a parliamentary amnesty together with other ringlead-

ers, of last October's armed uprising against the Russian leader. Mr. Yeltsin unsuccessfully tried to block their release at the last minute.

Mr. Zhirinovsky's refusal to see Mr. Nixon was more difficult to explain. The ultra-nationalist has been eager to meet foreign dignitaries especially in view of the fact that several other Western leaders,

including U.S. President Bill Clinton, have shunned him.

In a statement Thursday, presidential spokesman Vyacheslav Kostikov said the Kremlin did not object to contacts between foreign representatives and opposition leaders, but Mr. Rutskoi represented a separate and sensitive case, he argued.

"His behaviour during the October events, his appeals to the airforce to take off, his threats of cruel repression are too clear in people's minds for Russians to be indifferent to his meeting with a respectable figure like R. Nixon," Mr. Kostikov said.

He said that although Rutskoi had been amnestied he had not been freed by a court and was "still an object of charges of (carrying out) grave crimes."

This view is contested by Mr. Rutskoi and others freed under the amnesty.

Greece, U.S. discuss Macedonia dispute

GENEVA (AP) — After meeting with foreign ministers from Greece and Macedonia, U.N. envoy Cyrus Vance said he hoped Greece would soon lift its embargo against the former Yugoslav republic.

Greece imposed a trade blockade on Feb. 16 against its landlocked neighbour because of a dispute stemming from Greek objections to Macedonia's choice of name.

"It's very important that it does get lifted," Mr. Vance told reporters. "It's causing great pain and suffering from an economic point of view."

Stevio Crenkovski, Macedonia's foreign minister, said his government found it "impossible to continue the negotiations under the pressure of the embargo," but that he expected the European Union to find a way to end it.

The president's trip to New York — on his schedule for weeks — put him miles from Washington as aides begin appearing before a grand jury to answer questions raised in the Whitewater case.

Mr. Clinton made no direct reference to the controversy, but it appeared to him not completely put it out of his mind as he lamented the harsh rhetoric of Washington.

The president has come under sharp criticism from Republicans amid questions over White House aides' meetings with federal regulators investigating a failed Arkansas thrift with ties to the first family.

In his appearance at Brooklyn College, Mr. Clinton put new emphasis on a need for greater personal responsibility in combating crime.

In chilling detail, Mr. Clinton recounted the murder of Kitty Genovese 30 years ago in New York. The woman twice screamed at her attacker with screams, only to have him return and stab her to death when no neighbours came to her aid, he said.

Clinton talks crime-fighting in New York

"That story shocked us all 30 years ago," Mr. Clinton recalled. "I still remember it as if it was yesterday." Mr. Clinton said the years since Genovese's death should teach Americans that "we have to help, each and every one of us, to reclaim our streets, our schools, our communities and our lives."

At one point, Mr. Clinton chastised an AIDS protester who disrupted his appearance, saying the man was ignoring what government has done to fight the disease.

When the unidentified young man repeatedly challenged Mr. Clinton's commitment to fighting AIDS, the president cut him off, saying, "I've listened to you. Will you listen to me?"

Defending his administration's record on AIDS, Mr. Clinton said he had appointed the nation's first AIDS policy coordinator, Kristine Gehlie, developed a national strategy for fighting AIDS and increased federal financing for AIDS victims and research.

As part of the Brooklyn Forum, he talked with young people and adults who have gotten involved in volunteer efforts.

Mr. Clinton also put his "stamp of approval" on the treatment of a congressman's broken arm and was given some advice in return: For a politician, it does make a difference how you break a limb. Mr. Clinton noted that the local congressman, Rep. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., had a broken arm.

The president called Mr. Schumer to the stage to sign

the congressman's cast.

"This is a problem I can't solve; so I'm just putting my stamp of approval on the treatment of it," Mr. Clinton said as he signed the cast.

Mr. Schumer responded that there were Democratic and Republican ways to break an arm.

He said that when Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, a R-N.Y., a strident critic of Mr. Clinton's actions in the Whitewater affair, broke his arm, he did so "in the Republican way, skiing at Vail, Colo.," a posh winter resort town.

"I broke my arm slipping on the ice, 11 p.m. Saturday night, going to a community event at the Good Shepherd School in Sheephead Bay," the Brooklyn Democrat said.

The remark drew applause from the Brooklyn audience and Mr. Clinton had the last word:

"That wasn't on the programme; but it was pretty funny."

Mr. Clinton also visited police officers at Brooklyn's 61st Precinct to stress a need for more community policing programmes before an evening appearance at the United Negro College Fund annual dinner.

In Washington, some of president and Mrs. Clinton's aides are appearing before a federal grand jury to testify on the Whitewater affair but Mr. Clinton's new White House counsel says it all may not "amount to a hill of beans."

Two of Hillary Rodham Clinton's senior aides testified to the grand jury Thursday and

a White House lawyer carried in what he said was about 1,000 pages of subpoenaed documents.

The grand jury is investigating whether White House aides improperly interfered with federal investigations of the Clintons' role in a failed Whitewater land deal by holding meetings with those investigators.

Mr. Clinton's new White House counsel, Lloyd Cutler, said in a television interview that might look bad. But he said he believed facts would show the White House aides were not pressing to influence the federal investigations.

"The substantive facts about the last several meetings may not in the end amount to a hill of beans," Mr. Cutler said in a Public Broadcasting Service interview with Charlie Rose.

"They might have looked bad. But when it becomes clear exactly what happened at those meetings, it doesn't. In my view at least, I don't think it amounts to very much."

Mr. Cutler added on ABC's Nightline that he had not been White House counsel long enough to be certain there was no wrongdoing but said he believed the meetings were "trivial."

ABC News said its latest public opinion poll indicated the Whitewater affair was hurting Mr. Clinton's popularity.

It said his approval rating dropped to 52 per cent last week from 58 per cent last week and said that was the first big drop since last spring.

Actor James Caan held in gun incident

LOS ANGELES (R) — James Caan, best known for his role as hot-tempered mobster in the 1972 classic *The Godfather*, was arrested after he was accused of brandishing a gun during an argument, police said. The 54-year-old actor was booked on a misdemeanor charge at a police station in North Hollywood and was released on his own recognisance, said police Sergeant Christopher Vasquez. The incident began when a friend who had accompanied Caan on a visit to the actor's brother's apartment became embroiled in a dispute in the parking lot with another man over a car. Caan was alleged to have pulled out a loaded semi-automatic pistol, "waving it around in a threatening manner," Sgt. Vasquez said. The man called a "citizen's arrest" and called police, who then took Caan into custody and confiscated his gun. There were no injuries during the confrontation. Based on the man's complaint, Caan was booked on a misdemeanor charge of brandishing a gun in public, which carries a maximum penalty of six months in jail. "Mr. Caan was very cooperative," Sgt. Vasquez said. The Los Angeles City attorney's office must now decide whether Caan will be formally charged with a crime. The exact cause of the argument that led to Caan's arrest remained unclear. "The original thing I heard was it had something to do with vandalism (to a car)," Vasquez said. But he declined to elaborate.

Writing on dead man's arm leads to arrests

TUSLA, Okla. (AP) — It looked like one of those cases that are nearly impossible to solve: The apparently random shooting of a young hitchhiker. But Sheriff Gerald Coleman noticed a cryptic mix of letters and numbers on Donald Beartrack Jr.'s bloody arm — DER-352 — written once in ink and again with a marker. On a hunch, authorities searched Oklahoma motor vehicle records. They found a match, and by the next day, three men were under arrest in the slaying. Investigators said DER-352 was the license number of the car that picked up Mr. Beartrack, who is of Cherokee, Kiowa and Cheyenne-Arapaho ancestry. The 17-year-old apparently realised he was in danger and scrawled DER-352 on his arm just before he was shot twice in the head at close range early Friday. The arrests would have been nearly impossible without what amounted to a tale told by a dead man, the sheriff said. "In 28 years, this is the first time I've ever seen anything like this," Sheriff Coleman said. Police said it appears that Mr. Beartrack — a quiet, 6-foot-4 (1.93 metres) basketball player at an Indian boarding school — was on his way to his mother's home when he was picked up by the three men. They stopped at least three times for beer, and Mr. Beartrack bought some, officers said. "He knew he was in trouble," said his uncle George Hummingbird. "He was sharp enough to be aware of the situation after he got into it. How many people would ever think to write the tag number on their arm?" There was no evidence of a robbery, police said. There was no sign of a struggle, Mr. Hummingbird, who saw the body after it was discovered along a riverbank, said Mr. Beartrack still had one hand in his pocket. The license number was traced to a 1993 Ford Mustang registered to Bret Lett Adams, 23, and Joe Dale Cox, 25, and Howard Russell Murray, 21, were charged with murder.

Notre Dame Cathedral gets laser face-lift

PARIS (AP) — The three portals of Notre Dame Cathedral will get a state of the art facelift starting next week using the latest laser technology, culture officials announced. Experts say the laser beams will dislodge particles of dirt built up since the 13th century without damaging the remaining vestiges of colour still visible in the sculpted folds of the saint's clothes. Originally, the multi-coloured statues adorning the portals stood out against a gilt background, serving as a pictorial Bible for the illiterate. The laser technique has been used successfully to clean the facade of the cathedral in Reims. The restoration of Notre Dame's main doors since the mid 19th century. Work is scheduled to begin on March 18.

McEnroe: Greatest match was win over Connors

NEW YORK (AP) — Forget the "war of 1816" at Wimbledon or the two marathon Davis Cup matches. John McEnroe says his greatest match was when he beat Jimmy Connors to win Wimbledon in 1984.

"Everything seemed like this big for a six-month period," McEnroe said Thursday, spreading his hands as if he was holding a soccer ball. "The only match I lost was the one I was up two sets to love against (Ivan) Lendl in the French" Open final.

The Paris loss snapped a 39-match winning streak, yet McEnroe still captured 13 titles that year while compiling an 82-3 singles match record (.965), the highest winning percentage by a man in a single year in the open era.

"You've got to pick Wimbledon or the open because those are the two biggest events," McEnroe said when asked what he felt was his best match. "I felt it was hitting the ball a little better earlier in the year. I wasn't losing more than two or three games a set."

"But that period of time is when everything just felt like slow motion, very easy, a lot of time for anything I wanted to do, cross court, down the line, lob."

"It's a beautiful feeling."

While McEnroe won the "war of 1819" — the score of

the fourth-set tiebreak — he lost the 1980 Wimbledon final to Bjorn Borg.

In Davis Cup play, McEnroe defeated Sweden's Mats Wilander in a 6 1/2-hour marathon in St. Louis in 1982, but lost to Boris Becker of West Germany in a 6 1/2-hour match in Hartford, Conn., in 1987. Those are believed to be the two longest matches in Davis Cup history.

McEnroe, who participated in an announcement to the Advanta Tour Thursday, said he thought his game would continue to improve.

"I didn't realize how lucky I was that it was there at that moment," he said. "You end up taking it for granted. Then, when you lose it, it's frustrating."

McEnroe will resume his battles with Connors, Borg, Lendl and Wilander in a five-city tour beginning next month.

"There are the guys that bought out the best in me," McEnroe said in announcing the new tour, which brings together the five former no. 1 tennis champions. "These are all very competitive matches."

The tour begins in Denver April 21, then continues in Anaheim, Calif., April 23; Chicago Sept. 23; Charlotte, N.C., Sept. 24; and culminates in Key Biscayne, Fla., Dec. 3.

Court to decide Reynolds' award

CINCINNATI (AP) — A federal appeals court will decide if U.S. courts have the authority to award sprinter Butch Reynolds \$27.3 million.

The International Amateur Athletic Federation says it should not have to pay the money to Reynolds, who has been fighting the IAAF since it suspended him in 1990 for testing positive for a performance-enhancing anabolic steroid after a Monte Carlo meet.

A former Ohio state sprinter who holds world records in the 400-metre race and 4-by-400 relay, Reynolds called the testing faulty and later tested negative.

But the IAAF, track's governing body, maintained his two-year suspension and kept him out of the 1992 Olympics at Barcelona, Spain.

Reynolds, 29, sued in federal court in his hometown of Cincinnati, accusing the IAAF of denying him due process, defaming him and interfering with his business relationships through the suspension.

In December 1992, U.S. district judge Joseph Kinneary awarded Reynolds \$27.3 million.

Now the IAAF has asked the 6th U.S. district court of

appeals to overturn the ruling. Kinneary ruled that he had jurisdiction over the lawsuit because the IAAF suspension affected an Ohio citizen and his business relations with several companies, including some from Ohio.

But IAAF lawyer Eugene Gulland argued Thursday that the Columbus judge should not have jurisdiction.

The judgement could not be challenged in U.S. courts because the London-based federation is operating under rules agreed to by all participating nations, he said, pointing out that Reynolds participated in a London arbitration which upheld the drug testing procedure.

Reynolds, lawyer, John Gall, urged the appeals court to uphold the ruling. Gall said Reynolds testified as a witness in London because he was summoned, but he did not agree to submit the dispute to arbitration.

The appeals court took the case under review Thursday and did not say when it would rule.

Reynolds has not collected any of money awarded him because of the pending court fight.

Graf to play in Hamburg

BONN (R) — World number one Steffi Graf has changed her mind and decided to play in next month's Hamburg Open where her chief rival Monica Seles was stabbed last year, organisers said Friday.

Seles has not played competitively since she was stabbed in the back by a spectator who claimed he was a Graf fan.

Graf had originally decided to miss the tournament but tournament director Guenter Sander said she had changed her mind after talking with organisers.

Sander said five of the world's top 10 women would take part in the tournament from April 25 to May 1.

He said more guards and police would be present this year but added: "If a crazy person wants to do something crazy in front of the cameras, you cannot prevent that on any tennis court in the world."



Steffi Graf

Harding closer to world championships

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — The U.S. Figure Skating Association reluctantly cleared the way Thursday for Tonya Harding's participation in this month's world championships.

The association said it would not immediately appeal a federal judge's ruling that indefinitely delays a figure skating disciplinary hearing against Harding.

A five-member panel was to have convened Thursday in Colorado Springs, Colo., and could have banished Harding from the sport for her involvement in the attack on Nancy Kerrigan.

The USFSA said even if an appeal were successful the disciplinary process could not be completed before the world championships begin March 22 in Chiba, Japan. That process includes a finding by the special investigative panel and possible appeals to the association's executive committee and an arbitrator.

"Right now, skating for us will be Michelle Kwan and Tonya Harding," USFSA Executive Director Jerry Lacey said. "We think we'll be well represented. We hope they both do well."

The only potential obstacle to Harding's participation is the criminal investigation into the Kerrigan attack. If Harding is indicted before she is to leave for Japan, it would be up to an Oregon judge whether she would be allowed to leave the state.

Otherwise, she would be allowed to compete even if she was under indictment, Lacey said.

The chief prosecutor in the case, Norm Frink, said a grand jury could issue indictments in the Kerrigan case next week. The deadline for the grand jury's report is March 21.

"Anything's possible," said Frink, chief deputy district attorney of Multnomah County. "We're aiming to report no later than the 21st. Other than that, we're not making any comments."

He declined to comment on

Papin will leave Milan at end of season

MILAN (R) — French striker Jean-Pierre Papin said Friday he would be leaving Italian champions AC Milan at the end of the season.

In an interview with sports daily "Gazzetta dello Sport," Papin said: "The situation is so clear that even a child could understand it. I know now that Milan have already decided to dump me or, if you wish, Milan are now thinking about the future, have already planned the future and I have no part in it... In any case, I believe that my Milan experience will end in June. I still have a year of my contract to run but I have no illusions about that."

Papin, who joined AC Milan from French champions Marseille for \$8.5 million in mid-1992, has recently struggled to keep a first-team place.

In his first season with Italy's champions, Papin scored 13 goals in 22 league games.

The Sonics lead a 10-point lead at the half, 53-43, but Olajuwon made three blocks on one possession — two on shots by Shawn Kemp and one on a jump attempt by Kendall

UEFA to decide this month whether to oppose Havelange

BERNE (R) — The European Football Union (UEFA) said Thursday it would decide at the end of the month if it would put up its own candidate against FIFA President Joao Havelange.

Havelange, Brazilian president of world soccer's governing body since 1974, has been under increasing attack since he controversially barred Pele from taking part in December's draw in Las Vegas for this year's U.S. World Cup finals.

UEFA said in a statement it would hold high level talks with other confederations March 23 in Tunis during the African Football Confederation's congress.

"The outcome of these discussions with the most important representatives of world football will be announced to the executive committee at its next meeting in Barcelona March 30," the statement said.

"European football's supreme body will then decide whether or not it should put forward its own candidate for the election."

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Portuguese clubs square up for battle over taxes

LISBON (R) — Portuguese soccer clubs locked horns with the government Friday in protest at its seizure of Porto's stadium as a guarantee against unpaid taxes.

Porto Chairman Jorge Pinto da Costa said Thursday night that he would refuse to pay any debts while the ground, seized this week, remained in state hands.

"FC Porto has been insulted in a shameful manner... we will not pay a thing while the penalty imposed on us remains," he said.

Pinto da Costa received full support from Valentim Loureiro, chairman of local rivals Boavista and president of the League of Portuguese Football Clubs, amid press reports that the government was also planning to seize assets at several other first division clubs.

"This act will unleash an

all-out political war which I want to avoid," said Loureiro, a leading figure in Portugal's ruling Social Democrat Party (PSD).

The tax authorities seized Porto's 90,000-capacity Antas Stadium in the northern city of Oporto on Wednesday after the reigning champions failed to pay a 201 million escudos (\$1.15 million) tax bill.

Finance Minister Eduardo Caeiro said Thursday that this was a cautionary measure and the government did not plan to auction the stadium to raise the missing money.

But he warned that Portuguese football clubs owed 3.5 billion escudos (\$20 million) in tax arrears and a further 1.5 billion (\$8.6 million) in social security payments and could not receive a special exemption.

The seizure of Porto's stadium comes as Prime Minister

Anibal Cavaco Silva is launching a crackdown on tax dodgers to boost government revenue. A new director general of taxes was appointed this week to oversee the process.

Loureiro accused the government of bullying soccer clubs for non-payment of taxes, allegedly widespread in Portugal.

Pinto da Costa said the government was discriminating against regions. "They are trying to bring down one of the few still refusing to submit to the yoke of an increasingly centralised power."

Politicians across the board demanded clarification of the government's move yesterday.

"Every week companies are penalised without such a future," a finance ministry source said.

Other clubs with huge tax debts include Sporting and Benfica.

Olajuwon leads Rockets past Sonics

HOUSTON, Texas (R) — Hakeem Olajuwon scored six points in a decisive 8-0 fourth-quarter run and led the Houston Rockets to a confidence-building 87-82 win over the NBA-leading Seattle SuperSonics Thursday.

The once high-flying Rockets needed the boost. They came into the game just 18-15 since a league-best 22-1 start and last Tuesday relinquished first place in the Midwest Division to San Antonio with a loss to the red-hot Spurs.

With the win, Houston took back a slight percentage lead over San Antonio (.719 to .717), although the Rockets remained a half-game behind the Spurs.

Houston turned up the defence to outscore Seattle 44-29 in the second half.

"We came together," said Olajuwon. "We realised all we have to do is raise our intensity on defence and the offence will take care of itself."

Horry scored 16 points, Kenny Smith had 11 and Carl Herrera and Sam Cassell each added 10 for the Rockets.

Gary Payton had 19 points for the Sonics, who had a six-game winning streak snapped.

The Sonics lead a 10-point lead at the half, 53-43, but Olajuwon made three blocks on one possession — two on shots by Shawn Kemp and one on a jump attempt by Kendall

Gill, keying a 3-point break by Kenny Smith that cut the lead to 57-53.

In the fourth quarter, Olajuwon, who finished with eight rebounds and six blocks, rallied Houston from a 78-73 deficit to an 81-78 lead with six points in a key 8-0 run.

Cassell sealed the win with four free throws in the final 25.4 seconds.

Kemp had 14 points and 11 rebounds and Detlef Schrempf chipped in with 12 points and 11 rebounds for Seattle, which shot only 35 per cent from the field.

Seattle played without Ricky Pierce and Nate McMillan. Pierce is sidelined with bone spurs in his foot while McMillan has a strained abdominal muscle.

At Los Angeles, Vlade Divac had a triple-double — 22 points, 17 rebounds and 12 assists — and Nick Van Exel scored 17 points as the Lakers continued their domination of Dallas with a 106-101 victory over the Mavericks.

The Lakers, who are 3-0 against Dallas this season, have beaten the Mavericks five straight times and lead the all-time series between the

teams 25-7.

James Worthy, who scored seven of his 14 points in the fourth quarter, hit a jumper with 7:28 left in the fourth that gave Los Angeles the lead for good at 92-90. The jumper keyed a stretch of eight straight Los Angeles points.

Jim Jackson scored 21 points to lead the Mavericks, who have dropped six straight games.

Dallas played without leading scorer Jamal Mashburn, who has a strained left hip and did not make the trip.

Tim Legler scored 18 points and Doug Smith added 13 for the league-worst Mavericks (8-52).

At Golden State, Latrell Sprewell had 22 points and Billy Owens scored 19 and added 13 rebounds to lift the Warriors to a 100-97 win over the Portland Trail Blazers.

The Warriors, who lost at Portland Monday 137-108, stopped Portland's four-game winning streak and dealt the Blazers just their second loss in their last 12 games.

Golden State beat Portland for only the second time in its last 12 meetings with the Trail Blazers.

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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q.1—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
#7 A984 KQ10832 #92
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 NT Pass
2 ♠ Pass
What action do you take?
A.—On this auction partner must have a six-card spade suit. Since we rate to bring him at least two tricks, we would pass. Three diamonds might play a trick better, but it also is a level higher—and the opponents have not yet doubled.
- Q.2—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
#QJ1087 Q983 52 #K4
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass
What action do you take?
A.—You are very close to a game try, but with only one prime card we feel that any further action would be overly ambitious. If partner is near minimum on the bidding, you could be jeopardizing a sound partnership.
- Q.3—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
#A98 K A109644 #974
Partner opens the bidding with four hearts. What action do you take?
A.—Partner's vulnerable bid has promised eight tricks and you bring three. That means slam is going to be an odds-against proposition, especially since you might have two fast club losers. Even if that is not the case, one of your entries is likely to be removed early, so partner won't be able to establish and use
- the diamonds. Pass.
- Q.4—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
#AKJ10976 74 #88 #AQ10
What is your opening bid?
A.—If you came up with anything other than one spade, we would like you to state your case. Your hand is far too strong for any preempt, even four spades, and has nowhere near the high-card strength for a demand bid.
- Q.5—As South, vulnerable, you hold:
#AK75 KQ875 53 #96
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
Pass Pass 1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠
What action do you take?
A.—You have as little as the law allows for your opening bid and partner is a passed hand. This hand is going nowhere. Pass before the auction gets out of control.
- Q.6—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
#9 AKJ10875 K1076 #K
The bidding has proceeded:
North East South West
Pass Pass 2 ♠
What action do you take?
A.—In first, or second, seat we would have been prepared to debate the merits of opening three hearts vs. four hearts at this vulnerability. In third seat, we feel there's no bid other than four hearts—we want to make it as difficult as possible for West to enter the auction and, with a 4-1 distribution, we don't need a lot from partner to make game.

Krabbe pregnant to lawyer

BONN (R) — Former world sprint champion Katrin Krabbe, banned for two years for doping, is pregnant to the lawyer who has been backing her fight to overturn the ban.

"Katrin wanted to keep it secret for another four weeks. But there's no point in denying it now," Krabbe's close adviser Thorsten Heuses told the German sports news agency SID Friday. "Katrin will say more about it herself on Monday."

The father of the child is Michael Zimmermann, 32. The lawyer who has been backing the former East German sprinter's continuing fight to

overturn the ban that will keep her on of action until August next year. The child is due at the end of September.

Krabbe, the 100 and 200 metres gold medalist at the 1991 Tokyo World Championships, told Germany's Bild newspaper: "My goal remains the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta."

The 24-year-old German and her team mates Grit Breuer and Manuela Derr were banned by the International Amateur Athletic Federation last August after they admitted taking the banned drug clenbuterol in July, 1992.

T O D A Y	Cinema Tel.: 634144	Cinema Tel.: 699238	Cinema Tel.: 677420	Tel.: 618274 - 618275	Tel.: 675571	Nabil & Hisham's Tel.: 625155
	PHILADELPHIA	PLAZA	CONCORD	ANMOUN THEATRE	Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	AHLAN THEATRE
	Jean-Claude Van Damme HARD TARGET Shows: 11:00, 1:00, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Adel Emam in TERRORIST Shows: 10:00, 12:30, 3:00, 5:00, 6:45, 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD '1' Sylvester Stallone — in Demolition Man Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' Women of Desire Shows: 5:30, 7:00, 8:45, 10:30 Special film for children Dennis The Menace Shows: 11:30 a.m., 1:30, 3:00 p.m.	Opening Soon A political comedy Forbidden X Forbidden	presents a play entitled: Al ilm Nuron A popular political comedy Actors: Abeer Issa, Daoud Jalajel, Hassan Al Shaer, Foad Shomali in addition to other comedians Every night at 8:15 Tickets are sold all day Coming soon: The next play	Nabil and Hisham Theatre presents Ahlan Arab Summit Conference (play) daily at 9:15 p.m. Theatre is closed Sundays, Monday and Tuesdays

NEWS IN BRIEF

Syrian embassy in Tehran attacked

NICOSIA (AP) — Explosives were hurled into the grounds of the Syrian embassy in Tehran Friday, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported. The state-run agency, monitored in Nicosia, quoted Syria's ambassador in Tehran, Ahmad Al Hassan, as saying two explosives landed on the lawn of the embassy grounds and caused no damage or injury. IRNA referred to the explosives as "sound bombs," but Radio Monte Carlo said in a report from Tehran that two petrol bombs were thrown at the embassy. The incident happened as Iranians marked "Jerusalem Day" by publicly burning U.S. and Israeli flags and vowing to liberate Palestine. Syria, Iran's staunchest Arab ally, has aroused Tehran's displeasure by taking part in peace talks with Israel which Iran has excoriated. IRNA quoted Mr. Hassan as saying the attacker was mentally disturbed and was immediately arrested by Iranian security forces.

Slovak parliament ousts Meciar

BRATISLAVA (AP) — After months of political paralysis, the parliament toppled the government of Premier Vladimir Meciar in a no-confidence vote Friday. Deputies approved the motion 78-2, with 70 abstentions, in a secret ballot. A simple majority in the 150-seat legislature was needed to oust Mr. Meciar, who has been widely accused of an overly authoritarian and confrontational style. According to Slovakia's constitution, President Michal Kovac must dissolve the cabinet and designate a premier to try to form a new government. While its richer, larger Czech neighbour has bounded ahead with post-communist economic reforms, Slovakia has remained mired in political feuding since it won independence in the peaceful breakup of Czechoslovakia on Jan. 1, 1993.

Saudi Arabia bans satellite dishes

MECCA (AP) — Saudi Arabia has banned satellite and other devices which pick up international channels in an effort to regulate what is being watched inside the conservative kingdom. The cabinet issued a decree late Thursday prohibiting the import of satellite dishes and warning violators of fines of up to half a million riyals (\$133,000). The decree also bans decoders and prohibits manufacture of satellite dishes or their parts. Before the decree, locally-made dishes were sold for as little as 2,000 riyals (\$530). Thousands of dishes are estimated to be currently in use. They will be seized if found, according to the decree. The Ministry of Information will henceforth cull programmes from international networks and distribute them in the kingdom by cable to ensure what is screened "conforms to religious and social values," the decree said. Satellite dishes were never officially allowed, but they were widespread. Their popularity surged with Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, as Saudis sought news updates on the crisis and the subsequent war.

Lebanese party says 22 members arrested

BEIRUT (R) — The headline Lebanese Forces (LF) group said on Friday 22 of its members had been arrested by government security forces in the past 24 hours. A statement by the LF gave the names of the 22 men and described the arrests as illegal and part of a state campaign to crackdown on political freedom. Officials were not immediately available for comment. The LF statement came one day after Lebanese troops took up positions in the village of Ghedras where LF chief Samir Geagea maintains his headquarters. Dr. Geagea said the deployment of army units in the village was aimed at "increasing restrictions" on him and his followers. An army statement denied the charge and said the move was part of a plan to enhance security throughout the country. Dr. Geagea is a hardliner who opposes the role of Syria in Lebanon, where it has 35,000 troops deployed across two thirds of the country.

Ethiopian women charged with hijacking

NAIROBI (R) — A Kenyan prosecutor charged three Ethiopian women Friday with hijacking a Saudi airliner to Nairobi, where it was stormed by crack troops who shot a male hijacker. Prosecutor Peter Mwangi told Sofia Kadir Mohamed, 20, Fatuma Kaya, 22, and Muna Abdul Kadir Said, 20, not to enter their pleas until the government ordered him to prosecute. Mr. Mwangi told Nairobi's chief magistrate that an Ethiopian man, the prime suspect in the hijacking, was being held and would be brought to court when he recovered from bullet wounds. The magistrate remanded the three Ethiopian women in custody until another court appearance on March 25. The maximum penalty in Kenya for hijacking an aircraft is 14 years imprisonment.

هكذا صنعوا القدس



AL QUDS DAY: Veiled women hold flags inscribed with a picture of the Al Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem as they demonstrate in Karachi, Pakistan, after Friday prayers marking Al Quds Day. Thousands of protesters across

Massacre, church blast unite rival ideologists

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Islamists, and pan-Arab nationalists, long at loggerheads, are uniting their ranks following last month's attack on the Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron and the subsequent attack on a Maronite church in Lebanon.

"The February events were not the only reason why the front, which is a coalition of two parties, was formed but it was the final push," said the head of the powerful Islamic Action Front (IAF), Dr. Ishak Farhan.

Earlier this week the IAF and a relatively new and obscure political party, the National Action Front (NAF), announced that they were "coalition partners" resisting Zionist designs and new world order strategies to disrupt the middle eastern region. The NAF comprises mostly hard-line pan-Arab nationalists many of whom were outlawed in Jordan before democratic reforms were introduced.

"One of our main aims," said Mr. Farhan, "is to make clear that there is no real contradiction between Islam and the essence of western civilisation. These are superficial differences which are being played up by those who think they will benefit from a confrontation."

"There is an obvious effort to blacken the face of the Arabs and the Muslims in the world and our coalition aims at fighting this campaign of

hatred against Islam and the Arab people," he added.

The coalition is open "to all those parties and groups which wish to join," said an IAF member Thursday. While no clear "strategies" to counter the "anti-Islamic and Arab propaganda" had been drawn up as of yet, "preparatory meetings were" in the making, according to IAF officials.

None of the NAF officials could be reached for comment. The coalition joins the mostly secular pan-Arab activists and the largest Islamic party in Jordan. A source close to the groups said that the recent attempts to smudge the "image of Arabs in the West" had contributed to the formation of the coalition.

"The world trade centre affair, the unfair treatment of the accused and the verdict against them was one of the main points of concern, but this is one of many anti-Arab smear campaigns that we want to counter," said the source.

The charge that two Libyans blew up a Pan-Am airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, the continued sanctions against Iraq, the "media campaigns" against Arab and Muslim governments in Sudan, Somalia as well as recent moves by the French authorities to curb the movement of Arabs living in France were all mentioned as international issues that led to the forming of the coalition, said the source close to the NAF. The NAF was the 21st party to receive official licensing in Jordan this January.

Amnesty urges in-depth review of Israeli practices

AMMAN (J.T.) — Amnesty

International is calling on the Israeli government to conduct a comprehensive review of the way its forces have been policing the occupied territories, particularly in the light of the high number of Palestinian civilians killed in the aftermath of the massacre in Hebron on Feb. 25. At least 29 people were killed in the Haram Al Ibrahimi Mosque in the West Bank town by an Israeli settler. Up to 31 other Palestinians and one Israeli civilian have since been shot dead by Israeli forces, mostly during demonstrations.

"For over six years we have witnessed a pattern of unjustifiable use of lethal force by the army and the paramilitary border police in the occupied territories," Amnesty International said. Firearms have been used and killings have taken place all too often in situations which were not life-threatening or during confrontations that could have been avoided.

"The Israeli government should either adequately train these forces in proper crowd-control and equip them accordingly, or they should be withdrawn and replaced with ordinary police already specifically trained and equipped for crowd-control."

Amnesty International is also renewing its call for the introduction of effective on-site human rights monitoring in the occupied territories. "We believe the temporary international presence being discussed

at the moment between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) must include effective on-site human rights monitoring," Amnesty International said.

The human rights organisation recommends that monitors be deployed throughout the occupied territories and that their mandate should cover the actions of both Israeli and Palestinian law enforcement officials. The monitors should be empowered to take up incidents with local authorities and their reports should be protected against any political interference.

Further recommendations for effective on-site human rights monitoring are included in the Amnesty International report, peace-keeping and human rights, issued in January 1994. The report sets out a 15-point programme for implementing human rights in international peace-keeping operations.

In a statement to the U.N. Human Rights Commission on Feb. 1, 1994, Amnesty International called for the development of the on-site human rights monitoring function currently performed in the occupied territories by the research officers and the refugee affairs officers of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. A "temporary international or foreign presence" is provided for the declaration of principles signed in September 1993

by Israel and the PLO.

Amnesty International welcomes the establishment by the Israeli Government, on Feb. 27, of a judicial inquiry into the Hebron massacre, chaired by Meir Shargor. The organisation has urged the government to ensure that relevant international standards are fully respected in conducting such an inquiry.

Amnesty International also welcomes the government's commitment to prevent any repetition of the massacre of Feb. 25. However, it is concerned that the measures taken in this respect have included the administrative detention, without charge or trial, of five Israeli settlers, four of whom are now reported to have been arrested.

"We fully appreciate the authorities' concerns, but we oppose the administrative detention of political prisoners regardless of the identity of those on whom it is imposed: political prisoners should be tried promptly and fairly or released," Amnesty International said. The organisation continues to appeal for all Palestinian administrative detainees also to be tried promptly and fairly or be released.

Amnesty International remains gravely concerned at threats of arbitrary reprisals by Palestinian armed groups. The organisation is again calling on them to respect basic principles of humanitarian law and not to commit human rights abuses such as killings of civilians.

Arabs say Israel-France defence pact ill-timed

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel and France on Thursday signed their first defence cooperation accord since 1967 but Palestinians mourning the victims of the Hebron mosque massacre said the timing could not have been worse.

"The signing of this agreement is not a way to approve the terrorist act in Hebron," French Defence Minister Francois Leotard told reporters after endorsing the pact on military technology research and development with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Palestinian leader Faisal Al Hussein earlier told Mr. Leotard at a meeting in Arab East Jerusalem it was not the right moment for this type of agreement. He said Palestinians needed more security but Israel did not need more weapons.

It was the first defence cooperation agreement since the 1967 Middle East war when President Charles de Gaulle imposed an arms embargo on the Jewish state. Mr. Leotard

was the first French defence minister ever to visit Israel.

"The French people and people in the world feel anger after the massacre in Hebron because this is an act which could break the peace process and break the necessary trust between Israelis and Palestinians," Mr. Leotard said at a news conference.

"The only possible alternative to violence is not the status quo, but negotiations," he said. "France offered the Palestinians cooperation on security and on administration for a future self-government along with economic aid. Mr. Leotard said the French government was willing to train Palestinian policemen."

France supported an international presence in the occupied territories to ensure Palestinian security, he added.

Both Israel and France hailed the accord as an important step in rebuilding bilateral relations.

Sotheby's marks 250th anniversary

LONDON (AP) — Sotheby's was planning to celebrate its 250th anniversary in style Friday — with a giant cake delivered to the auction house by horse-drawn carriage. "The birthday means we are part of a tradition. How many businesses are 250 years old?" said New Yorker Diana Brooks, who was appointed a year ago to preside over Sotheby's and to keep the firm out in front of Christie's, its closest rival in the fine-art auction business. For the past 11 years it has been controlled by A. Alfred Taubman, a Michigan real estate developer. Sotheby's dates its foundation from March 11, 1744, when bookseller Samuel Baker sold a gentleman's library. The 457 volumes were described as "several hundred scarce and valuable books in all branches of polite literature," and they brought in £826, then about \$4,000. The firm's name comes from Baker's nephew, John Sotheby, who became a partner in the company. Through its main salerooms in New York City and London and in 11 other countries, Sotheby's auction sales last year realised \$1.32 billion (\$879 million). Despite the recession, the results were up from \$1.132 billion (then \$640 million) in 1992. Books remained the firm's chief business for more than a century. Christie's, founded 1766, was always the first choice of the nobility when aristocrats wanted to sell their works of art.

Aspirin little help for pregnancy disease

LONDON (R) — Aspirin in low doses does not, as hoped, prevent one of the most dangerous problems of pregnancy, Pre-eclampsia. But it does reduce the risk by about 25 per cent, a report said Friday. Pre-eclampsia, marked by high blood pressure, swelling of the limbs and kidney damage, is the most common disease of pregnancy. Symptoms include headaches, nausea and vomiting and left untreated, pre-eclampsia can lead to eclampsia, an extremely dangerous condition which is often fatal. A study involving doctors and midwives at 213 hospitals in 16 countries found no evidence to support earlier reports that taking small doses of aspirin prevents the illness. But the report in the Lancet medical journal said it did reduce the chances of a woman suffering from the disease. "Overall, low-dose aspirin reduces the likelihood of a woman suffering pre-eclampsia by only about one-quarter," the Lancet report on the collaborative low-dose aspirin study in pregnancy (ICLAP) said. But the report said the study, based on examining the effects of aspirin in 9,364 women between 1988 and 1992, found that aspirin was safe for both pregnant women and fetuses.

Girl who divorced parents returns to them

TAMPA, Fla. (R) — Kimberly Mays, the teenager who legally "divorced" her biological parents seven months ago, has apparently returned to them to resolve some personal problems. In a case that garnered headlines worldwide, Mays, now 15, severed all legal ties with her parents, Ernie and Regina Twigg, last year, saying she wanted to live on her own. The daughter of the man who had reared her from childhood, Robert Mays, Kimberly left the Mays home in Sarasota last week and moved into a YMCA shelter for troubled youths. The Tampa Tribune reported Wednesday. She left the shelter Tuesday afternoon and went with the Twiggs to their home in Sebring in southern Florida, 50 miles (80 km) from Sarasota. Source close to the Twiggs said she expected to enroll at the Sebring High School, but authorities there said she has not registered at the school. R. Peterson, a friend who was watching the Twiggs' home in Sebring, said the family had left town for a few days apparently to shield Kimberly from publicity. Lawyer George Russ told the Tampa News-Sun the teenager is having personal problems unrelated to the long-running custody battle between her biological parents and the man she calls father.

Rabin's track record fails to meet the need of the day

By Michael Jansen

FACED with the crisis precipitated by the Hebron massacre, Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin has refused to take the hard decisions which could both renew the peace process and curb extremist settlers in the occupied territories. And it is clear that U.S. President Bill Clinton, scheduled to meet with Rabin next week in Washington, will press the Israeli premier to take measures demanded by the PLO to provide security for the Palestinians in the aftermath of the Hebron massacre.

World public opinion's revulsion against such settlers and the guilt felt by a considerable constituency in Israel offered Rabin, his ally the U.S. and the more even-handed European Union the opportunity to promptly provide Palestinians in the occupied territories with some form of protection, disarm the most violent settler groups and place the issue of settlements on the negotiating table. But none of these things happened, forcing a reluctant PLO to suspend formal negotiations with Israel because of the anger and anguish felt by Palestinians in the occupied territories.

But did the world, the Arabs and the PLO expect Rabin to meet the political challenge posed by the Hebron massacre?

A reading of his career and career would seem to indicate that he is not up to meeting such a challenge in an imaginative and courageous manner. Yitzhak Rabin is not a man of "vision" but a "cautious"

man, too obsessed with every detail of every aspect of a proposal to have taken a quick, dramatic decision which could have transformed the crisis created by the Hebron massacre into an opportunity to contain the settlers and reinvent the peace process.

Born in Jerusalem in 1922, Rabin became Israeli premier twice: in 1974, and 1992. But he is not really a politician. He reached the premiership on both occasions by travelling along the military rather than the political path. In 1974 Rabin was the "clean" soldier who could clear up the mess in the army exposed by Israel's failure to predict the Ramadan war and in 1992 he was the soldier "obsessed with security" who, in the words of Israeli journalist Orit Galili, "uses an iron fist towards the Arabs but at the same time presents a peace plan." Although elected on a "peace ticket" and in spite of progress on the peace front, he remains dominated by military considerations and has, personally, drawn out the negotiations between the PLO and Israel in order to get what he, personally, wants on every point. In so doing he has also destroyed both the credibility of the negotiating process and undermined the PLO's credibility as his negotiating partner.

Even in the pre-state Palmach, his elite fighting force. As commander of the Harel brigade he tried to lift the Arab siege of Jerusalem in the spring of 1948. He rose to chief-of-staff by 1967, but

in the days before the June war suffered a nervous breakdown which caused him to ask Ezer Weizman, then air force chief, to take over his responsibilities. Weizman refused and overall command of the Israeli forces was assumed by General Moshe Dayan, appointed defence minister a few days before Israel's attack on Egypt. After capturing the West Bank and mopping up Egyptian resistance in Sinai, Dayan sided with Mr. Rabin to order the Israeli assault on the Golan, an action Rabin opposed.

Rabin was sent to Washington as Israel's ambassador in the late sixties and formed firm personal bonds with both the then president, Richard Nixon, and George Bush. He was in Washington during the October 1973 war, the first initiated by the Arabs catching Israel unawares and unprepared. At this critical juncture he was able to serve Israel by ensuring a flow of weapons and spare parts to its army. And when he went back home he was free of the taint of failure which attached itself to the generals who were responsible for the failure of Israeli intelligence to predict the surprise Arab attack.

Following the fall of Golda Meir's Labour government, Rabin became premier. In spite of the fact that the post-1973 war scene offered

him a unique opportunity to try, to quote him, "to gain time" in order to secure for Israel a "better situation" for making a settlement. He refused to consider an advantageous peace plan proposed

by the PLO because he was not prepared to negotiate with the "terrorist" organisation. Meanwhile, he responded to increasing pressure from the right-wing Zionist constituency by permitting the extremist Gush Emunim, "Block of the Faithful," movement to establish its first settlement near Nablus. The stated aim of the Gush was to squat illegally in Palestinian-owned property. Rabin's authorisation of Gush colonisation amounted to a departure for Labour which had allowed kibbutzim and moshavim to set up 32 "security" settlements in the occupied territories but had attempted to block what it called "political settlements," that is messianic or ideological settlements. Dr. Baruch Goldstein, the settler who perpetrated the massacre at Hebron, was a member of Kach, whose members have joined Gush Emunim colonies in the West Bank.

ANALYSIS

Rabin's first period in office was characterised by a failure to adhere to Labour policy, political drift and corruption. His government was brought down by revelations that his wife, Leah, had an illegal bank account in the U.S. His successor as head of the Labour party, Shimon Peres. Rabin's long-time

friend had been a man of vision who had seized the opportunities presented in 1974-75 he probably would have been able to secure the support of the Israeli public opinion for the peace process

launched in the aftermath of the 1973 war. At that time the Knesset was dominated by moderates (who held 61 seats against 43 for the hawks), the shift to a hawk majority took place in the fateful election of 1977 which Peres lost (the spread being 62 hawks, 49 moderates and nine doves).

Rabin opposed the 1982 war in Lebanon before it was launched by the Likud although he did not join the few personalities to come out in opposition after the Israeli army crossed into Lebanon and besieged the capital. He said he could "live with a 24-hour bombardment of Beirut," while Israeli aircraft conducted a 12-day blitz against the half a million people in the western half of the city.

Rabin displayed similar sang froid when the intifada began in December 1987. As defence minister he called upon his soldiers to beat demonstrators and break Palestinian bones. He also revived the then suspended practices of blowing up houses and deportation.

When he became premier, he resumed his iron fist tactics for suppressing Palestinian resistance to the occupation, deported 415 Palestinians on Dec. 17, 1992, and introduced the "terroristic" practice of deploying tanks to bring down the houses of Palestinian "suspects" instead of explosive charges. Rabin's iron fist

army was ordered not to shoot settlers who were attacking "residents of the territories" (Palestinians) or anyone else (including other soldiers or Israelis). It is clear that such treatment en-

couraged extremists to believe they were invincible and could do anything they wanted in the occupied territories.

Rabin's Knesset shifted from hawk to moderate domination, with his coalition commanding 61 secular seats, including at least two dozen Israeli Jewish doves along with five Arab seats. Also allied to the moderate camp is the Sephardi Shas ultra-orthodox party, with six seats, its spiritual leader, Rabbi Ovadia Joseph, is "dovish" on the peace front. This leaves the hardline hawks of the Likud and its allies with 43 seats, not enough to block Rabin if he were to make serious concessions in the peace process, concessions which would create a momentum towards an overall agreement favoured by the large "dovish" constituency in both the Labour Party and the country.

But Rabin has demonstrated throughout his career that he was better at executing policies set by others than initiating his own.

In June 1948, Rabin was the officer in command of the army unit charged by the then Premier David Ben Gurion with the task of preventing the landing on a Tel Aviv beach of the Altalena, an Irgun ship carrying arms to wage war against the government which was trying to disarm the Zionist extremists. His men opened fire on the ship, setting it alight, killing 15 Irgunists. Many years later Ben Gurion asked him if he regretted this action and Rabin replied: "If I received an order from the government of Israel, I would carry it out." So far Rabin, who considers extremist Jew-

ish settlers living in the midst of Palestinian towns "mines waiting to explode," has refused to entertain the idea of moving them out of these areas. Unlike in 1948, when Ben Gurion ruled the roost in Israel, there is no man of vision issuing orders to remove and disarm extremists; only a "man of details."

It is ironic that Rabin has to count on the support of Bill Clinton, his Secretary of State, Warren Christopher and National Security Adviser Anthony Lake to deflect pressure on Israel to take action against extremist settlers. This is because Rabin, an old friend of Clinton's predecessor George Bush, deeply distrusted Clinton because he and his two top advisers were seen by Israelis as heirs to Jimmy Carter, who forced Israel to make concessions in negotiations with Egypt. However, since coming to office, Clinton and his team have demonstrated their total commitment to Israel by undermining the U.N. Security Council resolution of Dec. 18, 1992, demanding the immediate and unconditional return of the 415 Palestinians expelled by Israel the previous day, by sustaining financial aid to Israel at previous levels in spite of the recession in the U.S. and by watering down the terms of a Security Council resolution on the Hebron massacre and postponing a vote until such a resolution was acceptable to Israel, the perpetrator of the massacre, and using the U.S. veto to blackmail the PLO into resuming talks with Israel "unconditionally" and on the basis of "business as usual," in spite of the Hebron massacre.